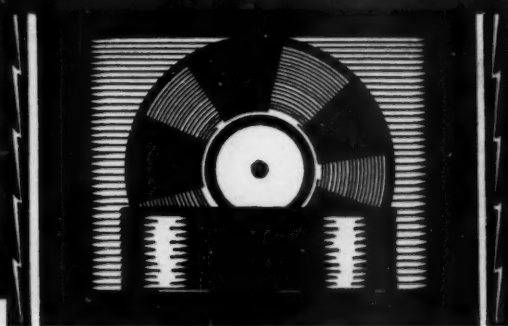


FEBRUARY

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EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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# The American Music Lover

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## FEBRUARY

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### EDITORIAL

THE death, on January 15th, of Harold Samuel, one of the greatest Bach interpreters of his time, was a great shock to the musical world. Since 1921, Mr. Samuel has been internationally famous for his playing of Bach's keyboard music. His performances were characterized by an absolute comprehension of Bach's thought, by an absence of any self-consciousness, and by an extraordinary ability to communicate to the listener the same keen pleasure in the music that he himself received from performing it. Needless to say, Samuel's technique was perfectly adjusted to the music.

It was only a year ago that we sat with a small group of musicians and, in the most delightfully intimate surroundings, heard Harold Samuel play Bach for two hours. Between numbers, he would smile and make some remarks relevant to the music, and then one of us present would ask a particular question about Bach's style, and he would inevitably turn to the keyboard to illustrate his answers. It was in this manner that his program was formed. The memory of that evening remains with us as one of our supreme musical experiences.

After Mr. Samuel reluctantly arose from the piano, largely because of a specially prepared repast in his honor, we had a long talk with him about Bach. The keen appreciation of Bach's music which he imparted to us profoundly stirred us. "Why not tell our readers some of these things?" we asked. "I'd be glad to," he rejoined, "but I'm sailing for England in a few days, and there is so much to do. I'll have to postpone that honor until I return next year." We greatly regret that Samuel's story must now remain untold.

The phonograph has some worthy examples of Mr. Samuel's artistry, the best of which are undeniably his Columbia recordings because they were made more recently. It seems a pity that he was never called upon

(Continued on Page 356)

#### Assistant Editors

WILLIAM KOZLENKO  
PHILIP MILLER

#### PETER HUGH REED

Editor and Publisher

#### PAUL GIRARD

Circulation Manager

#### Contributing Editors

LAWRENCE ABBOTT  
A. P. DE WEESE

The American Music Lover, General Offices: 12 East 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.  
Telephone ALgonquin 4-8363

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# NICOLAI MIASKOWSKY

By WILLIAM KOZLENKO

IT IS a curious commentary on the progress of our musical taste that Nicolai Miaskowsky, certainly one of the most significant contemporary composers, should be so seldom represented on the programs of major symphony orchestras in this country. In the past ten years, there have been less than a like number of his symphonies performed in our concert halls. Only two conductors seem to have considered his music worth continued repetition. We refer to Leopold Stokowski and Frank Black, of whom the last named has consistently played Miaskowsky's *String Sinfonietta*, Opus 32, No. 2 in his concerts with the NBC String Symphony on the air in the past two years. That no recordings have been made of one of his symphonic works seems to us to be a lamentable neglect.

Born in 1881, Miaskowsky is a year older than Stravinsky, and ten years the senior of Prokofieff, two of his most celebrated compatriots. Chronologically, at least, he is within the span of their generation, though musically he shares little of their ideals or aims. While the music of Stravinsky may be said to be an art of revolution, that is, of violent change from traditional to new forms, the music of Miaskowsky is essentially that of transition: music that may be considered the most cohesive juncture between the romanticism of Tchaikowsky and Scriabin and the atonalism of Schoenberg.

In spite of its *transitional* value, Miaskowsky's music occupies a singular place in contemporary Russian art, for while it is influenced by Tchaikowsky and Scriabin, particularly in the use of harmony and form, it is distinctly personal in idiom, original in workmanship; all of which helps reflect in some way the spiritual and mental turbulence of Miaskowsky's personality as an artist.

The distinguishing trait of his music is its austerity. In fact, it is this incisive concentration on the so-called linear elements in

music — to the exclusion apparently of all else — that has stamped him a cold and objective writer. This objectivity has destroyed a certain endemic warmth manifest in the music of most of the older Russian composers.

Thus Miaskowsky's music, though replete with feeling, contains little of the exotic sensuousness or the glowing radiance found to such a large degree in the scores of Rimsky-Korsakoff or Borodin. Nor does it attempt to emulate very strictly the simple, ecstatic grandeur of his favorite Tchaikowsky. Moreover, the rhythmic complexities palpable in the scores of Stravinsky or the harmonic cleverness manifest in those of Prokofieff are singularly missing in Miaskowsky's music. Naturally, the absence of these specific ingredients — identified with the music of each composer — has fostered an impression that the style of Miaskowsky is almost entirely unrelated to any previous harmonic or structural idiom in Russian music. But this impression is false. Tchaikowsky, Scriabin, Debussy and Schoenberg — each in some manner — have contributed to the formation of Miaskowsky's style: we are aware, for instance, of the intense romanticism of Tchaikowsky; the sharp, tart dissonances of Schoenberg; and the luminous transparency of Debussy. All these, combined, present of course a unique composite of styles, but once assimilated by Miaskowsky, they soon become part of his own peculiar personality.

This reaction to different qualities in contemporary, romantic, classical music is characteristic of a nature sensitive to the ebb and flow of musical styles. There happen to be many such composers who reflect the dynamic, the changing, rather than the static or inert elements in life or art.

But it would be a mistake to conclude that, because of the inclusion of several tendencies in his music, Miaskowsky's art is but a re-



pository of all the styles antecedent and contemporaneous. We are aware, always, of a dynamic personality declaiming vigorously in his own harmonic tongue.

This peculiar kind of vigor, evident in his music, is particularly emphasized by an extraordinary craftsmanship. Miaskowsky reminds us, in this respect, of Tanieff, except that the former is creatively a greater artist, a more profound thinker, and a more original inventor. But it is natural that, as a craftsman, his music should reflect the mannerisms inherent in craftsmanship. In other words, as a technician Miaskowsky seeks to eliminate as much as is harmonically possible the unessential properties of subjectivity — undue agitation, temperamental outbursts, and irrelevant emotional declamation. By eschewing many of these impassioned, intensely personal qualities, he obviates that which helps establish an emotional constellation in art.

His music, therefore, appears objective only because he refrains from dealing with the substance of emotion in an explicit or romantic way. One may describe the creative state of Miaskowsky as *arrested ecstasy*, in distinction to the *dynamic ecstasy* of a Tchaikowsky, a Scriabin, or a Beethoven. In other words, instead of working from a state of emotional inspiration, he works from one of mental concentration.

Only a man cerebrally excited can compose one symphony after another without becoming emotionally overwrought over the process. Compare the emotional disturbance, the nervous agitation, of a Beethoven or a Tchaikowsky when writing a symphonic work with the almost pathological calmness of a Miaskowsky, who composes without suffering apparently any of the "inner tortures" of a hypersensitive musician.

## II.

Miaskowsky is essentially a symphonic composer. Like Beethoven or Sibelius, he thinks symphonically: a musical idea conceived on the moment is an idea that invariably fashions itself into an orchestral pattern. Even his piano sonatas — titanic works in their own medium — are composed with the dynamics, the feeling and perception of the orchestra, unconsciously in mind.

Moreover, it is interesting to point out that each of his symphonies (except the *Sixth*, which contains an *ad libitum* chorus in the finale) though mainly absolute music, was

inspired by a dramatic picture. The programmatic substance does not seem to be connected with the thematic material itself, that is, it is hardly ever projected by the music, but the manner in which the themes are treated leads us to conclude that without this picture in mind Miaskowsky would never have devised that particular treatment for that specific symphony. Thus, as with Sibelius, each symphony suggests a different picture, the outgrowth of a different artistic conception.

He has often been called the "Moussorgsky of the Symphony". Though the appellation



is apt in some ways, both composers are essentially different. Miaskowsky reveals a much greater formal mastery. The relationship, insofar as it exists, borders on the temperamental and emotional rather than the formal and harmonic. For instance, both are concerned with death. Both are inclined to deal with dismal subjects, to treat them psychologically rather than epically (as, for example, Miaskowsky's symphonic poem — *Silence*, and Moussorgsky's dramatic cycle *Songs and Dances of Death*).

"The main trait of Miaskowsky's music," writes Igor Gliebov, "is its utter darkness:

a gray, awesome autumnal darkness transmuted into a moonless night, a tenebrious darkness. The power and action of this music comes from its dynamic idiom, which one could describe as a state of anxiety of various degrees and colorings: from timorous apprehension, to dread of the immobility of nature, of its terrifying silence and menace."

This lugubrious description may be considered fitting when applied to Miaskowsky's earlier works, but his recent creative endeavors — like the *Sinfonietta* and the *Fifteenth Symphony*, on which he is working at present, show no such hopeless dejection. He can no longer be hailed now as the apostle of doom, as a man whose music is "the pessimism of a sick spirit, a spirit without a wide-sweep: a pessimism without prospect, hopeless, dejected and imprisoned." Perhaps the present society of Soviet Russia has helped effect a new emotional transformation. Perhaps it has helped him revise his standards of art, substituting a positive and hopeful attitude in place of a negative and hopeless one. Whatever the reason, his hypochondria as an artist has now been replaced by a new buoyancy. This will be found, for example, in his symphonic work dealing with life on a *Collective Farm* — the title, incidentally, of his new work. In short, instead of going into himself for material, Miaskowsky now looks about him, and his vision as a result is that much larger and more comprehensive.

He has been described by Victor Belaiev as being "neither objective nor philosophic. The extreme dissonance of his work proceeds from a remorseless following out of broad formal lines of polyphonic construction without concession to minor detail\* . . . Spiritually, he represents in music, contrasted with Stravinsky, what Dostoevsky, contrasted with Chekov, does in literature . . . He has a rich sense of orchestral dynamics quite his own, and his thematic matter is very subtle".

That he possesses this strong feeling for dynamic contrast is undeniable, yet there is also evident an orchestral sonority which,

compared with that of Tschaiakowsky or Scriabin, is thin in mass, dull in color, and hard of texture. There is a piercing shrillness, a garishness of instrumentation, which is often aurally shocking and certainly unwelcome. But the musical substance in Miaskowsky's symphonies is so cohesive, the dynamics — despite their sparseness — so striking, the thematic material, though bleak, so meaningful, that a symphony by Nicolai Miaskowsky must be reckoned an important contribution to contemporary orchestral music.

He has written much: symphonies (16), symphonic poems, piano sonatas, songs, and chamber music. Among the finest examples of his works there may be singled out for their enduring value, his *Third Piano Sonata* and *Reminiscences, Opus 29*; his songs — *Moon and Mist* and *Uniformity*; his symphonic poems *Alastor* and *Silence*; his *String Sinfonietta, Opus 32, No. 2*, and his *Fourth, Sixth and Tenth Symphonies*.

A recording of one of the three symphonies or the *Sinfonietta* named would surely be a welcome and worthwhile contribution to recorded musical literature. We wonder why Stokowski, who has played several of Miaskowsky's symphonies, has not undertaken such a venture before this.

In advancing such a suggestion, it might be well to point out to those who could bring it about that Koussevitzsky, Stokowski and Rodzinski have played Miaskowsky's works upon many occasions and are therefore eligible for the purpose.

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\* It is difficult, however, to reconcile Miaskowsky's profound mastery of counterpoint with his deep aversion to the great contrapuntal art of Bach. Can it be that the sanguine, healthy personality of the great polyphonic master conflicts with and harasses the nervous, moody and dejected individuality of Miaskowsky? Can it be that a highly developed art, like counterpoint, with its many long flowing melodic lines would find little appreciation in an essentially morbid nature like Miaskowsky's? Either premise, I confess, is purely hypothetical; but it nevertheless helps explain why Miaskowsky, a profound master of counterpoint himself, should abhor the art in the greatest of all contrapuntal masters.

# Tribute to Tschaikowsky

By PETER HUGH REED

**T**WO Tschaikowsky symphonies listed by separate companies in one month!

It is a long time since such a simultaneous tribute has taken place. Nowadays Tschaikowsky is disparaged and neglected. His highly stressed emotions, his lack of natural poise, are adversely regarded by the modernists who do not hesitate to go to other extremes; while the classicists decry his morbid romanticism and his lack of restraint.

Yet a modernist can appreciate Tschaikowsky, as witness Stravinsky playing his *Third Symphony* with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra this past month. Stravinsky, whose admirers, as Critic Lawrence Gilman has noted, would hardly deign to recognize Tschaikowsky "by even the most distant of musical nods," plays his music because he likes it. This startling fact deserves elaboration. For those who did not read Mr. Gilman's recent article in the New York Herald-Tribune on Tschaikowsky's *Third Symphony* and on Stravinsky's regard for the composer — let us quote: "Stravinsky has frequently taken occasion to pay tribute to that most esthetically disreputable of all composers, Peter Ilyich Tschaikowsky. In his latest literary publication, the engrossing *Autobiography* which appeared last year, Stravinsky refers to Tschaikowsky as a composer 'for whom my admiration has continued to grow with the development of my musical consciousness.' Later, he alludes to him as 'the great Russian composer,' for whom he has 'great admiration.'" In another part of his *Autobiography* Stravinsky speaks of his own ballet *Baiser de la Fée*, inspired by the music of Tschaikowsky, as giving him "the opportunity of expressing my heartfelt homage to Tschaikowsky's wonderful talent."

In a day and age when it has become the fashion to disparage Tschaikowsky, the revival of an early symphony — one that had not been played as a fact "for more than a half century by a major orchestra" in New York — and the tribute of its modern composer-conductor are indeed strange events.

And that two of his time-honored symphonies, the *Fourth* and the *Sixth*, should be released simultaneously by two recording companies almost immediately following Stravinsky's gesture of tribute is indeed a coincidence of startling magnitude.

Mr. Gilman's article\* on the *Third Symphony*, besides setting forth the qualities of this work and Stravinsky's veneration of his fellow countryman, presented an interesting indication of the indifference and ignorance of eminent critics, particularly in this country, toward recorded music. Says he, at the opening of his dissertation — "It is an extraordinary fact that a symphony by Tschaikowsky, virtually unknown to the present generation, will be heard in New York . . ." And later, "this symphony will be unfamiliar music to those who listen to it next Thursday, Friday and Sunday under Mr. Stravinsky's baton." It seems strange that Mr. Gilman does not know that this symphony is very familiar, rather than "virtually unknown to the present generation," and, as one correspondent hastens to point out, also undoubtedly known to many in the very audience that attended Mr. Stravinsky's concerts, since it has been available on Victor records for several years now in a performance by a major symphony orchestra (the London) under the direction of that salient interpreter and admirer of Tschaikowsky's music, Albert Coates. As a matter of fact, Coates' recorded performance of this symphony is so far superior to that given by the eminent composer-conductor — Stravinsky — that it seems a pity that Mr. Gilman did not know of its existence, for we feel certain he would have paid it at least a passing tribute.

To return to the growing tendency of the day to disparage Tschaikowsky, which usually is climaxed by a similar assertion to that voiced by Constant Lambert in his *Music Ho!* — "or else the sentimental clichés of Tschaikowsky which through their saccharine obvi-

\* Appeared in the music section of the New York Herald-Tribune — Sunday, January 17, 1937.

ousness give a peculiar savour to the acidities of their incongruous accompaniments." Tschaikowsky is a romanticist, a sentimentalist. He is a neurotic, a pessimist, his music "lacks the noble restraint of the masters who, in their symphonic lyrics, wonderfully suggest the still waters that run deep (sic)." The arguments against him are multiple. No music, it would seem, stirs greater disparagement upon occasion that does Tschaikowsky's.

Recently a friend remarked to us: "I like Tschaikowsky. His symphonies are full of melody. Yet most of my musical friends tell me that I should not like him — that it is not the thing to do. They imply it's bad taste to like him, and that I should by now have outgrown him. But, despite their admonitions, I still enjoy his music."

### Go On Listening

The apologetic manner in which he spoke irked us momentarily, but we did not let him know it. Instead, we quietly informed him that no man needed to apologize for his musical likes or dislikes. "Go on listening to Tschaikowsky, particularly the Tschaikowsky of the symphonies, as long as the desire to do so exists," we told him. "He was a great melodist, and you are right in appreciating this side of his art. Much of his music is well worth treasuring. Musical growth does not necessarily mean leaving his music behind. One can add to their tastes without taking away. There may come a time, however, when you will find yourself turning less and less to his music, but this will not necessarily mean that you have outgrown it."

Tschaikowsky, we have pointed out before, is everyman's musician. His simplicity, his sincerity, his humanity, are compelling. He had the courage of his condemnations, of his enthusiasms. And he too knew the ecstatic horror that Dostoievsky knew and felt, although he lacked the vitality to express it as deeply as that great writer.

The assertion that one must outgrow one's early tastes in music is a superfluous one. It is, as a fact, an ambiguous statement. One's growth in any art is not by any means an outgrowth of any part of that art. As taste and appreciation grow and solidify, however, one finds that one's early admirations are displaced, but not necessarily discarded by others. Few of us have escaped the appeal of Tschaikowsky's fervent melodies, even though we later refute them in our deeper cognizance of the self-same art of which they are truly

an essential part. Many of us have become surfeited with them because we have heard them too often, or have over-indulged ourselves in their emotional appeal, and having done so now deride them, forgetful of their early significance — nay, necessity — in the adolescent development of our musical appreciation.

Let us examine the three symphonies of Tschaikowsky alluded to above — the *Third*, the *Fourth*, and the *Sixth*. Although the *Third* is not a review item this month, it nonetheless deserves comment here in view of the fact that a first rate recording of it is to be had, and because of the interest newly awakened in it by its recent performance in New York and Mr. Gilman's article. Mr. Gilman says: "It may be granted at once that Tschaikowsky's *Third Symphony* has not the vitality and drive and salience of its successor, the perennially popular *Fourth*. Yet the *Third* is anything but a negligible work. There are pages in it that transcend in distinction and fineness of texture anything in the *Fourth* . . ." And later in the same article he further states: "It would not be true to say that Tschaikowsky's *Third Symphony* is as telling a score as his *Fourth*, his *Fifth*, or his *Sixth*. It isn't. Yet it is a work of charm, of feeling, of refinement, of invention and ingenuity. Some of it is banal. (Tschaikowsky is, at some point, always banal . . . ) . . . This score of Tschaikowsky is, indeed, so much more effective than certain often-played symphonies by other men that its neglect remains a mystery."

### The Creation of the Third

Tschaikowsky began the composition of his *Third Symphony* in June, 1875, six months after the completion of his *B-flat minor Piano Concerto*. It was referred to at first as the *Polish Symphony*, because of its occasional usage of Polish rhythms, but this sobriquet ill fits it. It has been more aptly described as reflecting "partly the spirit of Schumann and partly the brilliance of the French School." The work, full of verve and élan, shows the composer's advance in the symphonic form in both its contrapuntal resources and its instrumental texture.

Between the *Third* and the *Fourth Symphonies* came the composer's tone-poem, *Francesca da Rimini* (1876), perhaps the finest program work he wrote. The *Fourth Symphony* was begun in the Spring of 1877

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## An Interview with Elisabeth Schumann

**ELISABETH SCHUMANN**, leading soprano of the Vienna State Opera and concert favorite everywhere, recently returned to these shores for an extensive tour after a three year absence abroad. She brought the information that she recently completed some new recordings for HMV in England, among them some light Viennese music of the operetta type, and several Schubert lieder, including *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, *Liebesbotschaft*, *Litanei*, *Der Musensohn*, and *Auf dem Wasser zu singen*. In one of her former recordings where the effect of a canary singing was desired, Mme. Schumann displayed her ability in this direction by imitating the bird's song herself. Were not the label stamped with the information that Mme. Schumann was responsible, the listener would be convinced that an actual canary-song had been caught and dubbed in at the appropriate moment on the record.

Another unusual recording of this type which the singer has made is the alto-soprano duet from *Hansel and Gretel* in which she sang both the voices. "The alto is not very low, so I can sing it," she explained to us, "and the result is most effective."

Mme. Schumann relates that when the recording of *Der Rosenkavalier* was being made in Vienna several years ago, both she and Lotte Lehmann enjoyed themselves very much during the process. On the day when Mme. Lehmann was to sing the Marschallin's *Ja, ja*, following the trio in the last act, the recording director discovered that he had neglected to notify her to come to the recording session. Whereupon Mme. Schumann volunteered to save the day by supplying the *Ja, ja* herself. Subsequently her tonal imitations of Mme. Lehmann were discovered to be so perfect that even the interpreter of the Marschallin herself had to be told of the substitution.

Mme. Schumann's favorite composer is Schubert, and she observes that she cannot feel happy about a program unless Schubert

is represented on it. She is also known as a fine Strauss-singer, for it was Strauss himself who chose her to sing his songs when they came here for a concert tour in 1921. Her admiration for Richard Strauss is boundless and she loves to tell of the time when he was coaching her in the Mozart motet, *Exsultate jubilate*, and decided to insert a cadenza in the first movement for her. For a few moments he fingered the piano keys and tried several combinations. Then, looking up at



ELISABETH SCHUMANN

her seriously, he said, "You know, it is rather difficult to compose 'Mozart.'"

Mme. Schumann, also a noted interpreter of Mozart, is one of a relatively minor group of vocalists who adhere to the traditional use of the *appoggiatura* in his music. We asked Mme. Schumann why modern singers drop this ingratiating embellishment, which Mozart unquestionably conceived as an essential part of his melodic line. "It is, of course, a matter of personal feeling," she said, "and

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# Schumann-Heink

## As Posterity Will Know Her

By PHILIP MILLER

WITH these words — "That is the great wish of my heart — to die as I have lived — in harness" — closed the memoirs of Ernestine Schumann-Heink. She has had her wish. Starting out at seventy-five upon a new career in motion pictures (no one knows where it might have led her) the great singer has been halted by death. She leaves behind her a record of achievement unsurpassed.

No artist ever lived closer to her art than she — in few has the bond between art and personality been so complete. She was not so much a singer as an institution: she could no more be compared with other contraltos than Kreisler or Paderewski with violinists and pianists. She was as much a symbol of motherhood as Whistler's famous painting. Surely no musician has ever been so sincerely loved as she.

The facts of her long career are well-known, and need not be recounted here. Undoubtedly her spirit will live on for many years to come in the innumerable anecdotes which have been told of her. And in her numerous recordings she has left a priceless artistic memorial which will help to keep her name alive. These records cover a wide range of music, and it is of the best of them that I propose to write.

Her recording activities began with celebrity recording, and lasted, roughly, about thirty years. This career divides itself easily into four periods. Of the first — her brief connection with Columbia in 1903 — I am not qualified to speak, since I have never had the good fortune to hear one of the five discs she made at that time. Needless to say, they are now very rare and highly prized collector's items. For the rest of her life she was under contract with Victor.

The second period covers the artist's prime, up to the years of the war. Because of the great physical and mental strain under which

she lived at that time, the generosity with which she gave herself, and — yes, advancing age, the years which followed, though active ones, show a decline in her powers. The third period brings us to the advent of electrical recording, and the fourth includes her later activities. With one exception the records of this last era add nothing to her stature. There are, however, several cubits in that exception — the *Erda* Warning from *Rheingold*, and *Waltraute's* narrative from *Götterdämmerung*. This disc will be prized by all who remember the artist as she was in her last years, and particularly in those memorable performances at the Metropolitan when, as guest, she dwarfed her younger colleagues by her magnificent delivery of the brief music of *Erda* (Victor 7107).

For the rest, then, my remarks will be confined to the second and third periods, with special emphasis on the second. The long list of selections which she recorded contains some rather surprising omissions. I do not find that she ever preserved her rendering of her favorite air from Bruch's *Odysseus*. This is particularly regrettable, as it was her singing of this music which won her an encore on the Sunday night of January 22, 1899, and it was the encore — the *Lucrezia Borgia Brindisi* — which established her in America. One also misses *Befreit*, the Strauss song of which she was so fond.

The list does contain, of course, many songs which have been especially identified with her name. Such things as *The Rosary*, *His Lullaby*, *Danny Boy* and *Before the Crucifix* are distinguished principally by her affection for them. On a somewhat higher plane, though also transfigured by her performance, are *When the Roses Bloom*, Chadwick's *Allah* and *The Cry of Rachel*. In the last named the singer's vocal power and intensity succeed in making the song thrilling.

Then there are, of course, such war-horses as the Arditi *Bolero* — display pure and

simple, but tossed off with such gusto and rhythmic abandon that it fairly takes one's breath away — the aforementioned *Brindisi* from *Lucrezia Borgia*, sung in German, but with irrepressible verve, trills, long leaps and one unbelievable sustained note; the yodel song *I und mei Bua*; two arias from *Samson and Dalilah* in German, a very tender version of Lang's once popular *Irish Love Song*, *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*, the Chadwick *Danza*, and *But the Lord is mindful of his own*. Several of these were recorded more than once, but all belong to her second period.

More important are the selections from *Le prophète*, which date from 1907 and 1909, since her impersonation of *Fides* is described by the oldsters as the finest within memory. Surely no one in our time has brought so much tenderness to the singing of *Ah! mon fils* (83187). The record is an admirable demonstration of her ability to lighten the voice for the higher flights without sacrificing quality. She actually sings the high note — and I mean sings, not vocalizes, for she does not find it necessary to drop her words in order to rise above the staff. We shall see again and again that she understood the importance of the word in singing, and the humanity which we admire on this record is due chiefly to this understanding. The two parts of the *Prison scene* (88094-5) are musically inferior, of course, to this famous *arioso*, but the same electrifying high notes and the same bigness of utterance, which is the secret of singing Meyerbeer, are there — as well as an incredible display of *bravura* in the second half.

She first recorded the Brahms *Wiegenlied* in 1906, but I have heard only the last of the two or three later versions. It is rather disappointing — the song has been sung more smoothly by other singers, and the essential lilt is wanting. *Fruehlingszeit*, by Reinhold Becker, is not an important song, but boasts an unusually effective climax, of which Schumann-Heink makes the most (87012, recorded 1907). There is an expansiveness about the way she pronounces the word *wunderschön* which does the heart good. It might be well to note here that most of the *Lieder* records, according to the custom of the time, were made with orchestra. That was considered more effective then, but given a modern machine it is a cause for regret.

One of the very best Schumann-Heink records, and one which is rather rare today, is the fine old Handel air, *Lascia ch' io piango*, from *Rinaldo*, recorded in 1907 (85112). The

vocal warmth and stylistic breadth with which she imbues the music are unforgettable.

The 1907 *Orfeo* record (88091) is another disappointment. Sung in German, as *Ach, ich habe Sie verloren*, the great melody loses some of the smoothness of the Italian text. Furthermore, the singer here takes certain liberties with the rhythm — an amazing fault in a generally fine stylist. Her treatment of certain words, however, nearly makes up for the deficiencies.

But by all odds her masterpiece is her 1908 recording of *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht*.



#### SCHUMANN-HEINK

at about the time she began to record

So popular was her singing of this simple carol that it had become a regular feature of every American Christmas. Let us hope that this magnificent old record will be broadcast in her memory many Christmases to come. No one else has ever sung the song with such fervor, and such perfect balance withal. Never once does she disturb the quiet flow of rhythm, yet all Christianity is in the tone of her voice. In the second verse she manages one of the subtlest and most telling *crescendos* I have ever heard. Her heart-warming pronunciation of the word *Ruh'* is

a real experience. The record until recently was available in the Victor catalog, as No. 6281.

The big aria from *Rienzi* (88140, or \*IRCC 31) again shows her command of dramatic utterance as well as the lightness which she could impart to her tremendous voice. As an example of pure *legato* and the proper manner of executing a turn, the record is a prize.

The 1909 list is headed by two records which unfortunately I have never heard. It is quite safe to say, however, that she could not go wrong on a song so utterly suited to her style as Mendelssohn's *Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rath* (88155) or the Kuecken folksong *Treue Liebe* (87021). Her *Mondnacht* is not among her best efforts, though the 1909 recording (88197 — 12 inch) is far better than the re-recording released in the early 1920's. For once I feel that she is temperamentally out of her class, for the singing has not the atmosphere the song requires.

The *Titus* aria (88196, or IRCC 31) is good Mozart and grade A Schumann-Heink. It has the *legato*, the *coloratura*, the style and the big-heartedness for which her name stands. Her treatment of the word *guardami* is one of the details which stamp the record as great. Worthy of note is her little disc of the same year, on which she sings Reger's charming *Des Kindes Gebet* (as *The children's prayer*) and Weingartner's well-known *Liebesfeier*. It is strange to find the first song done in English with piano accompaniment, and the second in German with orchestra. But the result justifies the discrepancy. "Mother" Schumann-Heink is with us in the first song, and the *Lied* is deeply felt, though her diction in English is not so clear as in any of her other languages. I have heard *Liebesfeier* sung much more slowly than she takes it here, but there is no doubt in my mind that hers is the better tempo. Only at this speed does the jubilation of the song come out (87032).

Passing over the *Sapho* recording of 1910 (88212) which I have not heard, we come to those of 1912. This list includes the famous *Erkoenig*, which has been so often praised that we can safely neglect it here. The only real ground for complaint is the rather serious one of the orchestral accompaniment. This record is still listed in the Victor catalogue as 6273.

Another great work of that year is her *Sei still*, a fine song by Raff, which has become a rarity (88337). Her *Wagner Traume*

has unusual warmth and vitality, and a marvelously expressive use of the chest voice in the final words — *sinken in die Gruft* (88343). There is no recording to compare, as far as I know, with her *Die Forelle* of that same year. It has a piano accompaniment which sounds quite clear on an electric machine, and the singer fills the little song with naïveté and charm. I have never heard it sung with quite the lilt which she gives it, nor heard the word *Betrogne* done so pathetically (87104). 1912 also gave us her broad and spirited *Vom Himmel hoch* (88381, or 6281).

The Reimann *Spinnerliedchen* dates from the following year, and is perhaps the best example of Schumann-Heink's rich humor (87124). It is, of course, the old story of the mother inducing her daughter to spin, and the use of contrasting voices is parallel to that in the *Erkoenig*. The song ends with a joyous laugh. I am not familiar with the 1913 *My Heart Ever Faithful* (88448) but it is safe to say that it is much better than the unsatisfactory electric one.

1914 yielded a fine rendering of Grieg's delightful *Im Kahne* (88170), with piano; Delibes' *Bonjour Suzon*, in English (87168), and the famous *Lorelei* — good straight singing (6273).

1916 produced two gems. *The Mother Sings* is a desolate song by Grieg, sung to the English text. Both it and Loewe's *Erkennen* were inevitable songs for Schumann-Heink. The latter tells the story of the lad who comes back to his home village after several years, and passes unnoticed through the streets. When he meets his mother, of course, she recognizes him. The tonal quality of the passage where he gazes up at his old sweetheart in the window is lovely beyond description, and the cry of the mother "*Mein Sohn!*" voices the very soul of Schumann-Heink.

The MacDowell song, *The robin sings in the apple tree* (87171) is characteristic both of composer and singer.

From here on the list is less distinguished. With the war and her activities Mme. Schumann-Heink became more and more the "mother" and spent her time and her art on sentimental songs and gospel hymns. Her voice also showed signs of fatigue, and the recordings after this time do not compare with the earlier ones. Only two, then, of the discs made in her third period need claim

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\*International Record Collector's Club, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

# The Musical Affinity of Mozart and Debussy

By J. M. HOWARD

I BELIEVE it is the late Philip Hale who remarks somewhere in the course of his admirable program notes that there is a kinship between Mozart and Debussy. This observation seemed at first enigmatic, until—lingering in memory—it stimulated imagination to a comparison of my own. For Mr. Hale's view I have found more than superficial confirmation.

There seems an irreconcilable conflict between the externals of the two lives. Mozart lived only thirty-five years and composed with prodigal ease an unbelievable number of varied works; Debussy lived to be fifty-six and gave sparingly of his precious fruits.

Both, however, on reaching the end of their paths left a rich and singularly complete heritage, a harmonious fullness of output which it is hard to conceive could have been improved by any difference of method or the grace of longer life.

I am well aware that such a statement applied to Mozart is open to question, nor do I feel myself able to defend it within limited space. But let us look at his climactic works. Is not the *Jupiter Symphony* the fullest orchestral expression of Mozart's special genius, his ease in complexity, his clean singing strength? Is not *The Magic Flute* full to overflowing with his magic charm? And does not the *Requiem Mass* seem a symbol and acceptance of his close? Our minds perhaps may conceive a further development of his music, but that is only because we know Beethoven, and Beethoven is another composer. As it is, there are few musical lifetimes, however long, which have profited the world so much.

Towards the end, Debussy seemed fully conscious that he had sounded himself and given what he had. He has ceased making the creative effort, and his very latest things are imitations of himself. What he has received from others he has long ago made his own, and now the little province of his originality is rounded in a whole.

So Mozart in his last years was forced to spend much of his ebbing strength on musical frivolity. "Without being dissipated, he wasted his time and strength upon masked balls, dancing, feasting, and idle gallantry."

There is a certain correspondence in the environments of the two men—Mozart's "dance-mad" Vienna and Debussy's pre-war Paris. Neither was entirely a free agent, the German being compelled to write dances, the Frenchman to find for himself a new musical speech. W. J. Turner says Mozart was deficient in an active power (faith?) which Bach and Beethoven possessed. Debussy was recoiling from Wagner and Brahms; he lacked their unbounded, unashamed strength.

I cannot agree with Cecil Gray when he says that we have perhaps outgrown Debussy. Does not the following statement of his characterize Mozart's music as easily as Debussy's?

"It does not impose itself on us brutally or extract our unwilling admiration, as does the art of Wagner, for example, however much we may sincerely detest it and rave against it; Debussy's music must be wooed like a woman, for she only gives herself to those who love her."

That both composers suffered unwarranted censure and neglect during the balance of their lives is not surprising, since this is true of most artists who are honest in their creations, but that both should be decried from similar quarters, by those who might be expected to appreciate and rightly to evaluate their work—dilletantes and wealthy patrons—may guide us towards an essential affinity between them.

The Emperor did not like Mozart's music, ordering from his pen only dances for the people of Vienna. On Mozart's taking over the position of principal composer to the court, the Emperor reduced the salary of the post to such a figure that Mozart was grievously impoverished. It is known that he

borrowed money from a local merchant and was forced to take cheaper quarters. However, the move was a fruitful one for posterity if not for Mozart, since his letters testify that the change of surroundings impelled him to the great orchestral flowering of his genius: the three foremost symphonies. These were written in 1788 — June, July and August.

Here is what we find a contemporary critic saying of Debussy's lovely prelude *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*: "Written after a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé so sadistic that M. Colonne did not dare to print the text: young girls attend his concerts." And this in Paris!

Yet no one can doubt the daemonism making its languid honeyed presence felt in *The Afternoon of a Faun*, *Sirènes*, and parts of the opera, *Pelléas and Mélisande*. Mr. Turner has found a similar quality in Mozart, colder and less sensuous, but full of "sinister ambiguity," particularly displayed in the aria for the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*.

Lawrence Gilman, speaking of Debussy's *Nocturnes*, says: "The clarity of this music, its *Mozartean* economy of means, should be remarked." How restrained they are! Mozart is as classical and serene as a Greek frieze; Debussy equally free from all hysteria and over-wrought passion. Here is no photographic accuracy, but interpretation in the light of sane and balanced observation. Their long melodic lines, absence of superfluity, and fineness of detail give a distillation of beauty, sharp and subtle as a stiletto, flawlessly formed.

We have heard much of Mozart's ease in composing, and it is true that to the unconscious ear the tremendous last movement of the forty-first symphony sounds not unlike a gay and simple finale. *The Marriage of Figaro* was written in a comparatively short time, Mozart composing the music almost as fast as Da Ponte phrased the verse.

Debussy's method was much different, more painstaking, but if the results cause Paul Rosenfeld's words on him to apply equally to Mozart, we can be glad that each found his proper way: "Even at a first encounter the style . . . was mysteriously familiar. It made us feel that we had always needed such rhythms, such luminous chords, such limpid phrases . . . of all artists who have made music in our time, the most perfect . . . A thousand years of culture live in this fineness . . . . If any musical task is to be con-

sidered as having been accomplished it is that of Debussy."

Debussy gave Mozart many tributes, contrasting his taste to Beethoven's to the latter's disadvantage. Yet there is curiously little imitation of Mozart (or anyone else) in the modern's work.

Mozart's is the music of enchantment, like a clear bright day of May which yet in its very transparency seems like a veil just hiding a world of fairies and sprites. Like Ariel's music, it is the bond between the two strata of that haunted world.

Debussy too concerns himself with elusive things, but he goes into the heart of growing greenery, the stately clouds, the siren isle, and from his Forest of Arden man is often excluded. His clouds to be beautiful need no mortal comment.

Philip Hale quotes Hazlitt's testimony on music as that perfectly applicable to Mozart and Debussy: "Music is colour without form; a soul without a body; a mistress whose face is veiled; an invisible goddess."

Truly, the kinship between Mozart and Debussy would seem to me to be more than superficially confirmed, even though I can not offer more than an aesthetic basis for that assumption at the present time.

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### An Interview With Elisabeth Schumann

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too, many conductors are opposed to its use. Yet, I have always sung them. Not everyone understands the function of these grace notes, which are from above and not below. In Mozart, they must be definitely fitted into the rhythmic line to be successful."

The part of Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier* has long been associated with Mme. Schumann. She was the original choice of Strauss for this role in Hamburg. She has also sung the part at the Metropolitan Opera Company, and in the Philadelphia Opera performance, three years ago.

Mme. Schumann gave her only New York recital of the season with the New Friends of Music and shortly afterward left for engagements in Florida and Cuba. She will appear with the Beethoven Association on February 8th.



# New Voices for Old

By CATHERINE HOFFMAN

IT WOULD seem that whenever there has been a protracted lull in sensational news during the past twenty-five years, some opera singer or other stood ready to bridge the gap with a "change of voice" item. Baritones have suddenly discovered tenor propensities, contraltos have found hidden brackets of soprano notes and headlines have been made. There are many inducements indeed for the singer to explore his range in the hope of finding new heights and depths, but *legitimate* voice change is something of a musical phenomenon.

Considerable serious attention was but lately focused on this phenomenon when Rose Bampton, a favorite contralto with Metropolitan audiences and with record-buyers for several years, returned from a tour of Europe's music capitals, where she had made her debut in dramatic soprano roles. Rose Bampton is, of course, but one of an eminent line of singers to have discovered new vocal ranges after singing in opera for a number of years. Her prominent predecessors in this respect include Jean De Reszke, Giovanni Zenatello, Renato Zanelli, Lili Lehmann, Olive Fremstad, Margaret Matzenauer, Louis Graveure and Lauritz Melchior.

At the time of Miss Bampton's Metropolitan debut it was uncertain whether she was really a contralto or a soprano. Moreover, she had studied both soprano and contralto roles. Because of the uncertainty, however, she was advised by her teachers and conductors to be content with the contralto's lot until the higher range and tone brilliance of the soprano came easily to her. A strain toward the upper register, they believed, would do her more harm than good at the time. Three years of *Amnerises*, *Ortruds*, and *Brangænes* followed for the young singer, who realized that as time went on she was surely acquiring a soprano range and quality. But America had heralded Rose Bampton as a brilliant contralto, and would, she feared, never quite disassociate her from that role. She wanted her new-found dramatic soprano voice to be accepted at face value, and wisely, therefore, chose to try it out in Europe where there were no preconceptions extant. Hence the recent tour abroad, and hence the glow-

ing reports from Europe of the debut of a new American dramatic soprano.

Actually, there are but three half tones setting off the accepted range of contralto and mezzo soprano from that of the soprano. The tone quality is the essential difference. With constant use a voice often gains new flexibility and new ranges, and most of the singers who have set the precedent of so-called voice change have, in reality, but discovered a new quality in their voices, or, more often, merely a style of interpretation enabling them to encompass new and more dramatic parts.



ROSE BAMPTON

At twenty-three, Jean De Reszke was a promising baritone. To be sure, he could make high G quite easily, but the press notices of the day emphasized that it rested with young De Reszke to become one of the really great European baritones. *Don Giovanni*, *De Nevers*, *Valentine*, and *Almaviva* were the roles then associated with the singer who was to become one of the world's great *Lohengrins*; and it was not until several years later that critics noted in De Reszke's voice that robust charm characteristic of the tenor. Only after years of tenor triumphs was De Reszke able to live down the soubriquet "pushed up baritone".

Lili Lehmann, whose *Isolde* was her claim to immortality, was for years the reigning

light soprano favorite of Berlin. It was not until she had completed around fifteen years of singing soprano *sforzato* roles that Mme. Lehmann came to know Wagner at Bayreuth, and resolved to learn some of the Wagnerian dramatic soprano roles. Her first appearance in *Tristan und Isolde* was brought about quite by accident when it was found that Covent Garden had no dramatic soprano, and Mme. Lehmann was recruited from the light soprano ranks.

In Fremstad's case, the change of voice is somewhat doubtful. It is true that Mme. Fremstad's first concert and opera appearances were as a contralto, but she herself denied that this was due to anything other than bad advice from her voice teacher. She insisted that from the first she was a soprano though she boasted a vocal range of two and a half octaves. Something of the lady's vocal versatility is indicated in the fact that whereas her fame in this country rests largely on her performance of Wagnerian soprano roles, it was as *Carmen* that she endeared herself to the European public.

Matzenauer is another famous instance of the contralto turned dramatic soprano. A famous *Amneris* and *Brangaene*, Mme. Matzenauer learned rather late in her career that her voice possessed the essential tragic force of a dramatic soprano, and could easily ascend to the dramatic soprano notes. Her late and greatest successes were as *Kundry* and *Bruennhilde*.

When Lauritz Melchior was a student at the Danish Royal Opera, he won such favorable comments as a baritone that he was offered the role of the elder *Germont* in *Traviata*. For several years afterwards Melchior sang baritone roles in opera; and it was only the influence of Mme. Cahier, an opera partner with whom he toured in Sweden, that convinced him of his true range and launched Melchior on a career that was to establish him as the world's greatest *Heldentenor*.

Illustrating the great voice range of some singers, the story is told of how Caruso himself once pinch-hit for a basso who suddenly went hoarse just as he was beginning the "coat aria" in *La Boheme*. Frantically the basso made signs to Caruso, who turned his back to the audience and sang the deep aria, with no one in the audience any the wiser. The greatest tenor of them all was indeed so delighted with his own rendition of the bass aria that he had records made later, and gave one to each member of that particular *La Boheme* cast, then destroyed the matrix.

A number of well-known sopranos whose hearts and caps were set for that most glamorous of all female operatic roles, *Carmen*, have indeed essayed the definitely mezzo-soprano cigarette girl — Rose Ponselle being one of the latest; and it is even hinted that coloratura Lily Pons yearns to sing the Bizet role in pictures.

In the face of all this evidence of changing vocal registers, and particularly of Lili Lehmann's own contribution to it, it is interesting to consider what Mme. Lehmann herself once said on the subject of voice register. "What is a vocal register?" this great singer asked, "only a vocal position. Every voice includes three positions — chest, middle and the head . . . . Two of them are found connected, to a certain extent, in the beginning. The third is usually much weaker or does not exist at all. Only very rarely is a voice found not equalized over its whole compass." Mme. Lehmann then explained that what we call vocal register is really the vocal position which one finds easiest of access, makes one's own through long years of specializing in it, or adopts by imitation, and which, sooner or later, becomes a fixed habit. Most voice instructors agree, however, that a singer who would really succeed in opera ought to extend the compass of his voice as far as possible in order to be certain of possessing the compass he needs at the time he needs it!

The fact that a number of composers, dating back even to Handel and Beethoven, have actually forced singers of their music to broaden their vocal ranges, has been important in producing a generation of versatile singers. There is a legend concerning Handel which tells how the great oratorio composer once threatened to throw a leading soprano out of the window if she did not instantly climb to certain notes above her normal range.

From Wagner's day on, it has become increasingly important for our opera singers to cultivate longer and fuller vocal ranges. The great Master of Bayreuth, and the lesser composers who have followed in his footsteps, have created a demand for singers with completely flexible voices. The modern operatic composer expresses his feelings in music without any regard for the alto who has no high C or the soprano who lacks a low A-Flat or G. Gone are the days of the *Bel Canto* singer and vocalism for its own sake. The flexible dramatic singer is "the people's choice" for today.

# A Note on Mozart's E Flat Quartet, K-171

By NATHAN BRODER

IN July 1773 Leopold Mozart and his seventeen-year-old son journeyed to Vienna in the hope of securing an appointment for the gifted boy. The father visited friends and influential acquaintances, made inquiries, dropped hints, pulled strings, but to no avail. Meanwhile Wolfgang played the clavier and violin, added playful little postscripts to his father's letters home, and composed profusely — producing in two months a *Serenade* (K. 185) and six string quartets (K. 168-173).

The quartets show that Mozart was strongly influenced by the study he must have made of the most recent compositions in that form by Viennese masters, notably Haydn and Gassmann. The seven quartets Mozart had written previously (one in 1770 and six in 1772) contained, in the Italian fashion, only three movements, but in the present set he adopted the Viennese convention of adding a minuet to the fast-slow-fast scheme of the Italians.

The manuscript of the *E flat Quartet*, the fourth of the group, is dated August, 1773. Its first movement begins with a slow introduction. While this is rather common in Haydn, only two of Mozart's twenty-three quartets begin thus: our E flat and the great C major (K. 465). What is unique about this *Adagio* introduction is that it returns after the *Allegro assai* to finish the movement. The resultant form, slow-fast-slow, that of the old French overture, was long out of fashion in Mozart's day and it is difficult to believe that he was perpetrating a deliberate archaism. It is much more likely that, as Abert thought, the nature of the material demanded a rounding-off, a return to the first mood, as the most satisfying conclusion. Especially noteworthy in this movement are the lovely figurations in the second violin in the *Adagio*, and the contrapuntal nature of the first subject of the *Allegro*.

The *Trio* of the *Minuet* is charming. How simple, yet how unexpected, is the beautiful

effect created in its fifth measure merely by flattening the G!

The *Andante*, in C minor, is a gem. It is carefully worked out and full of feeling. The four voices are quite independent of each other, the rhythmic life is varied and the effect of the whole is moving.

Haydnish in spirit and containing echoes of the Italian *opera buffa* style is the final *Allegro assai*. With a gay little second subject and an inconsequential "development" section, the movement is pleasing.

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In recording this quartet, *The Friends of Recorded Music* perform a service not only for music lovers in general, but also for students of musical history; for this work represents an early stage in the development of the string quartet, and it presents, in embryo, certain elements, like the contrapuntal activity in the first movement and *Andante*, that were later to be developed and fused into that style which can only be described as "Mozartean."

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## IT HAPPENED IN PALESTINE

THIS happened in Palestine. Toscanini, it will be remembered, consented to lead the Tel Aviv Orchestra, composed mostly of musicians exiled from Germany, as a protest against the policy of the Nazis. He had just finished the concert when, as in New York, a flashlight photograph was taken of him. The maestro, blinded by the sudden glare, left the stage in a temper. He was enraged and fuming at the culprit photographer. A man standing nearby mentioned the fact that a copy of this photograph with the program (which included a work by Mendelssohn, who is taboo in the Third Reich) was being sent to Dr. Goebbels at Berlin, with the sincere compliments of all the non-Aryans in the orchestra. Toscanini immediately forgave the photographer and added his blessings to the missive destined for Berlin.

### Tribute to Tchaikowsky

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and completed toward the end of the year. Apparently Tchaikowsky found greater inspiration in working from a program, for this first of his final set of three is definitely founded upon one, which subsequent to its first performance he outlined in a letter to his patron, Mme. von Meck. "The introduction," he confesses, "is the germ of the entire symphony. This is fate, that tragic power which prevents the yearning for happiness from reaching its goal." The insistent first motive of the *Allegro* is "a sweet vision" born of hope "... our whole life alternates between grim reality and fluttering dreams of happiness." This is the keynote of the first movement. "The second movement shows suffering in another phase. It is that melancholy feeling which broods over us as we sit home ... In the third movement no definite feelings find expression ... Regarding the fourth movement, he says — "If you have no joy in yourself look around you. Go to the people. See how well they know how to be merry, and how heartily they yield to their happy feelings. The picture of a popular merry-making ... Further comment is unnecessary. The music speaks for itself, and its popularity is indeed perennial, as Mr. Gilman has observed.

Sixteen years elapsed between the *Fourth* and *Sixth Symphonies*. Tchaikowsky's swan song, which his *Sixth* turned out to be, (although it was not planned as such), was completed in the fall of 1893. Much has been written about a programmatic premonition of death in this symphony, but it still remains difficult for the majority of writers on music to accept this. As Edwin Evans says: "It is uncharitable to suppose that Tchaikowsky had no greater object than to make the world pity him or to indulge his own self-pity." And even though this is universally accepted, and, we dare say, willingly credited by most lovers of music, it is nonetheless unjust. That this music reflects a soul struggle, we will concede. (Tchaikowsky himself stated: "Without exaggeration, I have put my whole

soul into it.") At the time of its creation, his was certainly a troubled soul. And this the music reflects — for in this "his most personal and characteristic utterance," as Lawrence Gilman has said, "—he emptied all the dark troubles of his heart — all that he knew of anguished apprehension and foreboding, of grief that is unassuageable of consternation and despair."

To Glazounow, as they left the hall after the first performance of his *Sixth Symphony*, Tchaikowsky admitted the evidence of a program, but he did not outline its nature. Originally, he seriously considered calling the work a *Program Symphony*. The title *Pathétique*, however, was suggested by his brother, and was not applied until the second performance. Although it appealed to Tchaikowsky at first, he subsequently withdrew it before the publication of the first edition. But the withdrawal availed him nothing, for the title had taken a firm hold on the imagination of the public. Yet, in all fairness to the music, the title is best forgotten. All the nonsense of the meaning of the music has been read into it by others, not by the composer. His mental conception of the music died within him, those that exist have been entirely the conjectures of others.

Perhaps it is best to divorce mentally all programs from Tchaikowsky's symphonies, to listen objectively instead for the power and individuality of the music, for the fervor and the beauty that are in them, and not for a subjective implication of a highly personalized drama, despite the fact that Tchaikowsky himself often suggested such a drama.

\* \* \* \*

Assuredly it is a tribute to a much disparaged composer that two symphonies of his are simultaneously presented in up-to-date recordings by rival companies in one month, and that a leading modern composer-conductor should revive a "virtually unknown" symphony in the concert hall in his performances with one of our leading symphonic organizations.



# Overtones

## New Orchestral Recordings

**EUGENE ORMANDY** and the Philadelphia Orchestra have been busy in the recording studio. We are informed that he has conducted Schumann's *Second Symphony*, and Tchaikowsky's *Pathétique Symphony* for Victor.

We are also given to understand that Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra in recent recording sessions made Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony* and Tchaikowsky's *Overture-Fantasia, Romeo and Juliet*; and that Stokowski, before leaving for the West Coast, remade for Victor his brilliant transcription of Bach's *C minor Passacaglia* and Debussy's *Prelude, The Afternoon of a Faun*.

\* \* \* \*

The latest British orchestral releases include Bach's *Third and Fourth Suites*, played by Adolf Busch and his Chamber Players, HMV DB-3018-22; the Scarlatti-Tommasini ballet music, *The Good-Humoured Ladies*, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Eugene Goossens, HMV C-2864-5; Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony*, played by Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra direction of Weingartner, Columbia LX-563-5; the *Nocturne and Wedding March* from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, played by London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham, Columbia LX-574; and William Walton's overture, *Portsmouth Point*, played by the B. B. C. Orchestra, direction Adrian Boult, HMV DA-1540.

## Kozlenko and Odets

Bill Kozlenko, a good friend of Clifford Odets, the American playwright, informs us that Odets has one of the finest record libraries in his home. A great admirer of Beethoven and Mozart, he owns almost all their recorded chamber works as well as the songs of Hugo Wolf and Schubert. Odets is playing with the idea of doing a play on the immortal Ludwig. That ought to make an interesting venture. Imagine Ludwig getting up and orating on the class-struggle, the exploitation

of the lower classes, and the French Revolution! Instead of counterpoint we shall listen to dialectics.

## New French Recordings

In France, Wanda Landowska continues her series of harpsichord recordings with a performance of Bach's *French Suite in E major*, HMV 5005, and his *Italian Concerto* and



WILLIAM KOZLENKO

*Three Little Preludes and Fugue in C minor*, HMV DB-5007-8.

Other interesting releases in France include — Brahms' *Sonata in E Minor, Opus 38*, for cello and piano, played by Piatigorsky and Rubinstein, HMV DB-2952-4; Mozart's *Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra*, played



by M. Oubradous and orchestra under direction of M. Bigot. HMV L-1026-7; Philippe Gaubert's orchestral work, *Inscriptions for the Gates of the City*, performed under the direction of the composer. HMV 5002-3; Franck's piano and violin *Sonata in A major*, played by the Menuhins, HMV DB-2742-45; and an interesting Sonatine for flute and piano by the Roumanian composer, Stan Golestan, HMV L-1024-25.

### Reger and Bach

Now that Rudolf Serkin, the eminent German pianist, has present his concert in Carnegie Hall and achieved a notable success, particularly with his playing of the Reger *Variations on a Theme by Bach* singled out by the metropolitan critics as a composition of singular importance, we hope one of the big recording companies will get after Herr Serkin and persuade him to record this magnificent work. It is perhaps one of the most difficult piano pieces ever written and, if issued on discs, will put the late Herr Reger amongst the immortals gracing the record catalogues!

### New Piano Recordings

Egon Petri continues his Beethoven sonata series with the bright and cheerful *Sonata in F sharp major, Opus 78*, English Columbia LX-576. English critics speak so highly of Mr. Petri's playing of Beethoven in his recent sonata releases we can only urge upon domestic Columbia the advisability of bringing them forward at an early date.

Backhaus, on HMV disc DB-2808, turns his attentions to Brahms' elaborate *Variations on an original theme, Opus 21*. Gradually, but not too quickly, the catalog of Brahms' works grows on records. There are still, however, a number of important chamber works which need recording. Will some enterprising recording concern take cognizance?

Artur Schnabel and his son Ulrich unite with the London Symphony Orchestra under Adrian Boult to play Mozart's *Concerto for two pianos, K-365*, on HMV discs 3033-35. This is the same work that Rae Robertson and his wife Ethel Bartlett played with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Barbirolli a few weeks back. If you enjoyed the broadcast, you'll probably want these records — tell us about it so we can tell Victor.

## SCHUMANN-HEINK As Posterity Will Know Her

(Continued from Page 330)

our attention, and they may possibly have been made at an earlier date. It is hard to believe that her *Traum durch die Dämmerung* (1045) so gloriously sung with piano accompaniment, was not at least ten years old when it was released in 1926. The *Sapphische Ode*, which occupies the reverse side is, I believe the same as 82739, which appeared in 1916. Unfortunately this song suffers from a lack of poise, and the singer makes the common and fatal mistake of breaking the long phrases. However, in spite of a great affection for the song, only once in my life have I known it to be quite satisfactorily sung, and that, of all things, on an old record by a high soprano — Frieda Hempel.

*Der Tod und das Mädchen* is good, but not extraordinary, and was probably also recorded earlier, though I doubt if it is the same record that appeared in 1907. It was coupled with the 10-inch *Mondnacht*, which, as I have intimated before, is none too good.

Two duet records should also be noted. *li nostri monti*, from *Trovatore*, with Caruso (89060), is excellent Schumann-Heink, though the tenor sang his music better on another disc with Louise Homer. With Geraldine Farrar, Schumann-Heink sang the Rubinstein *Wanderers Nachtlied*, and the record is one of the best from both artists (87504). Both of these duets date from 1913.

Though she belongs quite definitely to the golden age of Maurice Grau, Mme. Schumann-Heink charmed three generations, and her best records will delight many more. As we have seen, the earlier ones are usually more satisfactory — once our ears become accustomed to the primitive recording, only an occasional tendency to sharpness mars their manifold beauties. She was noted as a young woman for the evenness of her registers, and only in her later years do we notice the widening gap between them. Her high tones, at first so vital and thrilling — no other contralto in my experience had such a top voice — later became somewhat thin and forced, and time took a toll of her breath support. But to the end she remained a magnificent artist, and one for whom no apologies are necessary.

# The Library Shelf

## Another Tovey Volume and a New Book on Debussy

ESSAYS IN MUSICAL ANALYSIS: Volume IV, Illustrative Music; by Donald Francis Tovey. Oxford University Press, 1936. Price \$4.00.

IN his fourth volume of *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Prof. Tovey turns to illustrative music or music based on programs. The contents of this book, like that of the three which preceded it, were selected from the program notes that Tovey wrote at various times for his concerts with the Reid Orchestra in Edinburgh.

In a short introduction, the author tells us that "this volume deals with music which, being under no compulsion to adapt its habit to words, actions, or ceremonies, confesses itself to be descriptive independently of circumstances." He frankly admits that his collected essays do not attempt to analyze all symphonic music. Such men as Mahler, for example, he explains, are not deliberately neglected, but left out simply because his orchestra was not equipped with a sufficient number of horns, etc., to perform such music.

As in his previous volumes, Prof. Tovey writes with rarely penetrating insight on the music that has at various times engaged his active attention. An interesting commentary on his ability to decipher the implication of program music, the nature of the drama of which he knew absolutely nothing, is to be found in his opening notes on Elgar's *Falstaff*. His notes, he tells us, were written prior to the release of Elgar's exposition in *The Musical Times*.

Tovey reawakens an old argument in his criticisms of Berlioz's technique. It is, in his estimation, "as defective as beri-beri is a disease of defect in vitamins."

It is in his analysis of the principal favorites in the concert hall that Tovey reveals his great understanding and appreciation of music, and no end of originality of thought in such works, for example, as the overtures of Mozart, Weber, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. Such notes as he writes on the familiar classics are always doubly penetrating, how-

ever, as those who have read his first three volumes already know.

The present book contains notes on 59 works by 26 composers from Dittersdorf and Mozart to Vaughan-Williams and Hindemith. I can only repeat here what our reviewer said last month, that even though the price of this book is high, it is well worth it. For Prof. Tovey is one of the rare writers on music, one of those who stimulate genuine thought and greater appreciation. —The Editor.

\* \* \*

DEBUSSY, by Edward Lockspeiser. The Master Musician Series. Edited by Eric Blom. E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., New York. Price \$2.00.

A DEFINITIVE biography of Debussy has long been needed. The author of the present book has gone to great pains to obtain some facts about the composer never before published. These include many new letters printed here for the first time. Mr. Lockspeiser does not reveal any new facts on the artistic development of the composer, but his comments on his music are nonetheless relevant and well-made.

The book provides some very interesting highlights on Debussy's private life, and also on his opinions of other composers' music. Like many composers, he was extremely unkind in his comments on other artists' music which proved uncongenial to him.

The story of the quarrel between Maeterlinck and Debussy over the score which the composer devised for *Pelléas and Melisande* is related from both angles, since the account of Georgette Leblanc, Maeterlinck's wife, is included as well as Debussy's.

The *Master Musician Series* of books on the composers are all edited by that astute scholar, Eric Blom, and are decidedly worth owning, they provide the music lover in a compact and convenient form with a comprehensive study of the life, the artistic ideals, and the musical accomplishments of each composer they deal with.

—Paul Girard.



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# VICTOR

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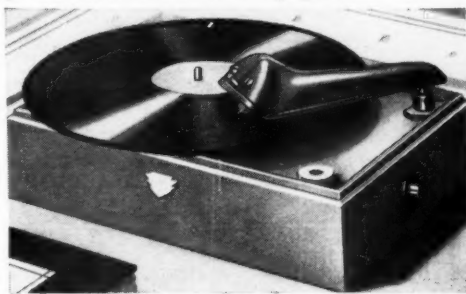
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# Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in This Issue: A. P. De Weese, Paul Girard, William Kozlenko,  
Philip Miller and Peter Hugh Reed

## ORCHESTRAL

HADEL: *Overture in D minor* (Freely transcribed by Stokowski); played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction Leopold Stokowski. Victor disc No. 1798, 10-inch, price \$1.50.

IN 1718-20, Handel was living with the Duke of Chandos at Cannons, England, during which time he composed a series of anthems which rank among his most exalted music. For one of the anthems, *In the Lord Put I My Trust*, he composed an *Introduction in D minor* for oboe and strings. This is made up of an opening slow section, followed by a fugued *allegro*. From this composition, Stokowski has derived the present overture.

Stokowski is not the only transcriber who has seen fit to make Handel's D minor introduction to one of his Chandos anthems into a concert overture. Elgar, the English composer, likewise freely transcribed the work, and at one time it was available on records played by the London Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Albert Coates. Elgar's arrangement of this music is over-stuffed, his modern orchestration ill fits the old world air of the music. Stokowski's arrangement, on the other hand, realizes its spirit much better, and admirably preserves it.

The recording here is excellent.

—P. H. R.

COATES, ERIC: *Cinderella* (3 sides), and *By the Sleepy Lagoon*; with the Composer conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Two Columbia discs, 7335-36M, price \$2.50.

THESE compositions of Eric Coates show his ability to handle a large orchestra, his craftsmanship, and his up-to-dateness, but reveal no marked originality in musical ideas. The music reminds us of the musical comedy stage, then the salon, but never the symphony hall.

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*Cinderella, A Fantasy*, was played at the Eastbourne Festival in 1929. *By the Sleepy Lagoon*, monotonous in substance, is an arrangement of one of Coates' songs.

Coates is a former principal violist in the Queen's Hall Orchestra and has often conducted the Promenade Concerts. He supplied part of the music of the current *White Horse Inn* and his ballad, *I Heard You Singing*, is known everywhere. *Cinderella* confirms his boast in *Who's Who* that he is the "first English composer to treat modern syncopation seriously."

—A. P. D.

\* \* \* \*

SUPPE: *Poet and Peasant Overture*; played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction of Arthur Fiedler. Victor disc, No. 11986, price \$1.50.

VICTOR here takes advantage of the services of Arthur Fiedler and the Boston "Pops" Orchestra to replace its antiquated version of the *Poet and Peasant Overture*. This hardy perennial is not so often heard today as it was in the times of William S. Hart and Wallace Reid, but it still holds up its head among the lighter classics, and has a very definite place in the musical education of everyman.

The *Overture* was used as part of the incidental music which Suppé supplied for Elmar's play, *Dichter und Bauer*, and has become inseparably associated with that now completely forgotten work, although it had previously done similar duty in connection with two other plays. In spite of occasional successful revivals of such works as *Boccaccio* and *Donna Juanita*, and the continued popularity of the *Light Cavalry* and *Morning, Noon and Night Overtures*, it is *Poet and Peasant* more than any other composition that keeps the name of Suppé alive.



Fiedler and his men give a thoroughly satisfactory, solid, and straightforward performance. The record has not the inspiration which transfigures the older Columbia Mengelberg disc, but the recording is smoother and more up to date. For those who will buy *Poet and Peasant*, I suppose, this is the thing that counts for most, but I recommend that they make the comparison.

—P. M.

\* \* \*

CORELLI: *Suite for String Orchestra* (1. *Sarabande*; 2. *Gigue*; 3. *Badinerie*), played by the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, E. F. Arbos conducting. Columbia disc. No. 68811-D, price \$1.50.

IT was wise for Columbia to collect these three scattered items (which were originally on two different discs) and press them onto one disc. Now, at least, the listener can have the Suite together on a single record. The recording is, obviously, an old one, for the ill-fated Madrid Symphony Orchestra is in no position at present to make records. The clarity of the playing is, however, good, and there is no sign of age or datedness. The conductor, E. F. Arbos, has caught the classic spirit of the music and, together with the string section of the orchestra, presents a suite of dances which are delightful to hear over and over again.

—W. K.

\* \* \*

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Opus 36*; (9 sides); and *Waltz from String Serenade, Opus 48*; played by Boston Symphony Orchestra, direction Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set M-327, five discs, price \$10.00.

KOUSSEVITZKY realizes the bite in the music of the first movement quite unlike anyone else who has recorded this work before him. The opening brass may be disturbing to some in a small room, for after all it is conveyed with almost full concert hall dynamics. The woodwinds and the brasses of the Boston Orchestra come through excellently if played with a steel needle. Fibre tends to give a clothly sound to some of the wind instruments, particularly the bassoon and the oboe.

The first two breaks in the opening movement are better chosen than those used in previous recordings, but I am inclined to quarrel with Mr. Koussevitzky on the choice of his third break. For this latter disturbs

the flow and power of the music, since it breaks into the final animated *allegro* of the recapitulation. The division in the second movement too seems less desirable; however, this business of breaks depends so much upon our familiarity with them that criticism upon their choice at this point need not be stressed.

The song for the oboe in the lovely second movement is not sentimentalized, its yearning note is suggested but not accented. Stokowski found more poetry here, but he did not have the benefit of modern recording. Koussevitzky gives us plenty of contrast here, enunciating the songlike themes of the music with rare clarity and precision. The closing pages of this movement are memorably performed, but the bassoon definitely needs steel to do it justice.

I do not think I exaggerate when I say we never had a *pizzicato* string recording as superb and as veritable as the third movement is in this recording. And what a performance! To describe it would be almost impossible. It must be heard to be appreciated, for such vivid music-making has a thrill to which words cannot do justice.

The meaning of the finale I have spoken of in my article on Tchaikowsky in this issue, and despite the fact I advise one to forget any program to this or any other symphony by Tchaikowsky, its association with the people may well be taken into consideration. For the music here is a vital picture of popular merry-making. It is based on a Russian folk-song *In the Field There Stood a Birch Tree*. The opening in this recording is stupendous, but not any bigger, I believe, than the composer intended it to be. The dynamic range of this last movement is a superb recording achievement, one which may well require some manipulation of controls in small living rooms.

Koussevitzky's interpretation of the *Fourth* is conceived along big lines. His is a heroic reading, which does much to evoke a more definite emotional reaction from each movement as a whole, and not from its various themes.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \*

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Symphony No. 6 in B minor (Pathétique), Opus 74*; played by the Paris Conservatory Orchestra, direction Philippe Gaubert. Columbia set No. 277, five discs, price \$7.50.

GAUBERT is an admirable musician, a conductor with sound ideas and an incisive beat. He does not over-exploit any music, nor

seek to over-enunciate its emotional qualities. There is more than wisdom in such an approach to the music of Tchaikowsky. Gaubert's attitude is one of fair play — let the melodies sing for themselves without undue emphasis, and mark the drama with a firm, incisive beat without undue stress. Tchaikowsky's emotion does not need exploitation.

Gaubert's reading of the *Pathétique* (superfluous *sobriquet* — see my article on Tchaikowsky in this issue) — may not be sensational, but it is a sound, well balanced performance — Gallic in its conception and with a healthy objectivity in its aura.

The Paris Conservatory Orchestra is not an organization like our Boston and Philadelphia Orchestras, nor is it comparable to the British orchestras. The players lack a first-rate wind section for one thing, and for another they lack polish. They start out well, attaining admirable tonal coloring in the opening section of the present recording. There is a good clarinetist in the orchestra, and Tchaikowsky has given him plenty of solo work. The sentimental second subject flows freely under Gaubert's baton — no sticky treacle here. On the whole the passage work here is exceptionally clean. The tune continues (side 3) and then with a *sforzando* cord the development begins. Gaubert's firm hand sets it off admirably. The drama here is somewhat self-conscious, sought after as a matter of fact, and the imprint of the neurotic is unmistakable.

The second movement with its famous 5/4 tempo flows nicely. The rhythmic curve here is not conveyed in a single bar but in a 2-bar phrase. The march-scherzo, which follows, has had much meaning read into it — why, I shall never know. There is genuine excitement in this movement. Gaubert may feel it, and actually convey it in the concert hall, but here the lack of bigness in the recording robs the music of some of its essential vitality.

Gaubert's reading of the much discussed *Adagio lamentoso* does not exaggerate "the frenzied wailing and sobbing," nor does he leave us with the impression that this is music "full of the chill terror of death." There are some bad deviations from pitch in the winds in this last movement, but apart from that the playing is first-rate and particularly admirable in the final parts.

A superficial comparison with other existent sets of this work shows that Gaubert has benefitted considerably by modern re-

cording and a wider range of frequencies, that his reading is more restrained than Koussevitzky's, and on the whole more fluent than Fried's.

—P. H. R.

\* \* \* \*

VILLA-LOBOS: *Choros No. 7*; played by the Victor Brazilian Orchestra, direction of the composer. Victor disc No. 11214, price \$1.50.

VILLA-LOBOS, the Brazilian composer, has written a series of fourteen compositions called *Choros*, "in which are synthesized the various modes of popular Brazilian and Indian music, whose main elements are a characteristic rhythm and some melody in the style of a folk tune, constantly transformed through the mind of the composer." The English word "serenade" is said to give a comparative idea of the implication of the title *Choros*.

The present *Choros* is for flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, violin and cello. The music varies between effects in tonal coloring and rhythm the latter being "emphasized by the use of Indian percussion instruments."

This record, long a collectors' item, has been in the Brazilian catalog for several years now, and importers have listed it in their circulars upon various occasions. The recording here is adequate.

—P. G.

\* \* \* \*

WAGNER: *Overture to Die Meistersinger*, played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham conducting. Columbia disc No. 68854-D, price \$1.50.

ONE of the most popular and most frequently played overtures is the one to *Die Meistersinger* by Wagner. The music itself is so sumptuous, so rich, than even an inferior conductor can frequently hide his blemishes in the lavishness of the orchestration. Naturally, when a conductor of the stature of Sir Thomas Beecham is at the helm one may be certain of an accurate and a scholarly interpretation. On the whole, he does not disappoint us, for the recording is magnificent in sonority and the playing is rich and full. It is, in truth, one of the most gorgeous pieces of music recorded to date.

—W. K.

**ZADOR:** *Hungarian caprice*; played by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, direction of Eugene Ormandy; Tarogato solo by Ray Fitch. Victor disc, No. 14031, price \$2.00.

**EUGEN ZADOR** is a young Hungarian composer (born 1894) now living in Vienna. His *Hungarian caprice* was first performed in Minneapolis, January 18, 1935, on which occasion Victor recorded it. Why it has waited two years before appearing on the lists, I do not know, but the recording shows no signs of age.

In the notes written for the premiere, Donald Ferguson tells us, "Last summer, while on a vacation in the land of his birth, Mr. Ormandy was driving through the fertile, rolling prairies which characterize so much of the Hungarian landscape, when he heard the distant sound of an instrument — somewhere between the English horn and the soprano saxophone in quality — throbbing forth a haunting melody, in the hands of some lone peasant. The instrument was the Tarogato. It has a single reed, like the clarinet, is not unlike it in appearance, and is reported to be extremely difficult to play . . ."

Ormandy was so fascinated by the sound of this instrument, that he procured one and brought it back to America with him. Meanwhile, having met with Eugen Zador in Vienna, he suggested that he write a work suitable for the Minneapolis Orchestra, featuring the tarogato. Ray Fitch, one of the Minneapolis double basses, set about mastering the instrument, and now, perhaps, has the distinction of being the only man to play a tarogato in a symphony orchestra.

The composition holds no great surprises; the title furnishes an adequate description of the style and form of the music. Only the tone of the featured instrument is particularly novel. There is one theme rather strongly reminiscent of Liszt's *Hungarian fantasia*, but whether or not there are any real folk melodies used, I do not know. In any case, there is a pleasant folksy atmosphere throughout the composition.

—P. M.

## CHAMBER MUSIC

**COPLAND:** *Trio "Vitebsk"* (*Study on a Jewish Theme*); played by Ivor Karman (Violin, David Freed (Cello), and the Composer (Piano). Columbia set No. X-68, two discs, price \$3.00.

**AARON COPLAND** is an active member of the League of Composers, a modern

music society, and also a regular contributor to their official publication *Modern Music*. Mr. Copland's *Trio "Vitebsk"* was written for the above organization and first presented by them at one of their concerts in February, 1929.

The Jewish theme upon which the work is based, the composer tells us, was first heard by him "in the Neighborhood Playhouse production of Arsky's folk-play *The Dybuk*. Although the melody is a traditional one, this particular version of it was current in Arsky's Russian birthplace, Vitebsk."

Mr. Copland's music here is contentious, harsh and sharply accented. There is a characteristic defiance, even rudeness in this music, and a querulous trend. Its originality lies in its acerbity and its utter disregard of conventional harmony.

The *Ukulele Serenade*, written in 1926, "at a time when the question of jazz and its influence was being much discussed," is a self-conscious piece with too many strivings for effect, definitely dated today. It lacks the essential motivating impulse of the *Trio*.

Both compositions are well played and recorded.

—P. G.

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FAURE: *Sonata in A major, Op. 13*; played by Jascha Heifetz, violin, and Emanuel Bay, piano. Three Victor discs, Set M-328, price \$6.50.

THIS splendid set is like the answer to a prayer. In my recent study of the works of Fauré I lamented the absence of this *Sonata* from the American record catalogues — the early version by Thibaud and Cortot having been dropped from the lists. Of course this new recording must have been made before my remarks were published, but my gratitude is none the less personal. Aided by the magic of the Heifetz name and art, the release should win for the *Sonata* many new friends.

There is no waste in the music of Fauré: every phrase and every note in this work has a logical bearing on the *Sonata* as a whole. Such unity, and at the same time such freedom, are to be found in the music of few composers indeed. The principal theme of the *Allegro molto* makes its appearance at once in the piano part, from which it is taken up by the violin. It is a youthful and captivating theme, and its development seems at once spontaneous and inevitable. The *Andante* is a gentle elegy in D minor, built upon two contrasting motives — a syncopated figure which appears first in the piano, and a gentle complaint in the violin. The *Allegro vivace* is a *Scherzo* of feathery lightness, beginning with a kind of repartee between the instruments. The way in which Fauré has implied all the essentials of the *Scherzo* form without confining himself within its limitations, and the manner in which the *Trio* theme grows naturally out of the first section, are examples of his perfect sense of form and his skillful economy. Typical of the composer, supremely right, yet quite unexpected, is the whimsical *Allegro quasi presto* with which the work closes. As always, Fauré leaves us wanting more.

It is good to find Heifetz again devoting his prodigious talents to music which is welcome in its own right. The lists of his recordings have never been overburdened with the subtler masterpieces, to which, nevertheless, he brings, when he does play them, a devotion and a musicianship not always expected of the technical wizard we know him to be. With the years his art has mellowed until his position today in the first rank of serious musicians is unassailable. It is good, too, to find his collaborator, Emanuel Bay, given equal credit on the record labels, though in the recording he is treated a trifle less well. The

piano tone, as recorded, is on the brittle side — just enough so to keep the balance from perfection.

As a performance, this set will easily bear comparison with the old Thibaud-Cortot discs. We may miss some of Cortot's fire in the playing of Bay, but the positions are reversed with respect to Thibaud and Heifetz. Thibaud is more Gallic, more restrained, especially in the second movement, where the *tempo* seems to me somewhat better chosen in the older version. There is more of protest in the playing of Heifetz, a more determined building to the climax. Bay slips over a note or two in the tricky *Scherzo*, and in one spot in the *Andante* my ear misses a couple of high octaves. But what are such things as these against the enormous virtues of the set? And at last we have an adequately reproduced performance of the work!

Now let us hope that the success of this *Sonata* will be sufficiently encouraging to warrant the recording of the lesser known second *Sonata*.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

LOEFFLER: *Partita for Violin and Piano, and Peacocks*, a transcription by Jacques Gordon for violin and piano, played by Lee Pattison, piano, and Jacques Gordon, violin. Columbia Album No. 275, four discs, price \$6.00.

FOR those who are familiar with the substantial worth of Charles Martin Loeffler's music the *Partita* will be no novelty, for it reflects much of the charm and strength of this master's art: for those, however, who may be unfamiliar with his music, this work will, perhaps, inculcate a strong desire to hear more and other of his compositions. There are pages in this score that are consistent with the best that Loeffler ever wrote, and there are others that do not come up even to what one may consider his fairly satisfactory. The truth of the matter is that the *Partita* is an uneven work. The specific shortcomings are mostly evident to me in the least interesting movement of the *Partita*, namely the *Divertissement*. It may be — for I am determined to find some reason for this — that the style of this movement was alien to the essential temperament of Loeffler. He was at heart a poet, an impressionist, a man given to profound lyrical utterances. The *Divertissement* is based on the rhythmic characteristics of jazz. For a man who was steeped in the effusions of the classic and

romantic poets, the nature of such a hybrid as "blues" would, in my opinion, create some sort of emotional conflict.

This is to say that I do not believe that a man may not enjoy Virgil or Verlaine and the "blues" at alternate moments, but it is possible that one might exert a stronger pull on him than the other; and from what Loeffler had composed before, we may be correct in judging that poetry and its tonal associates were stronger in him than a passing, though vital, interest such as Jazz and its correlate — the "blues".

The *Partita* is constructed along classic lines: the first movement, known as *Intrada*, leads to a brisk fugue, somewhat modern in idiom but thoroughly orthodox in treatment. The second movement, a *Sarabande* and *Five Variations*, is based on a theme by Johann Mattheson, a contemporary of J. S. Bach. This movement is one of regal beauty — dignified and stately yet filled with a homely throb of simplicity. Technically, this section reveals the deep understanding of Loeffler in classic forms. Then follows the *Divertissement*, which, as stated above, conflicts with the classicism of the two previous movements; conflicts in form not in treatment, for the entire *Partita* is consistent in style and idiom. That is, it is conceived in a contemporary spirit, with such orthodox forms as the fugue and the variations following the *Sarabande* colored by modern shifts of tonality. The finale is in the form of a *Rondo*, a movement in which Loeffler exhibits an amazing variety of color.

Much of the music depends, of course, on how it is performed; and in this sphere no two finer artists could have been selected to present this work than Mr. Lee Pattison and Mr. Jacques Gordon. To say that they play it with understanding and feeling would be but half-hearted commendation. Both musicians can play things well; but it is the best or near the best that must be considered in a final evaluation. They not only *feel* the music, the character of Loeffler as an artist, but seem determined to evoke all the latent qualities which are hidden away in the multi-colored phrases of the four movements. In short, here is no pedestrian interpretation, but one in keeping with the many superlative and rich elements of the music.

It is interesting to learn that the late Loeffler dedicated this work to Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge (that inspired patroness of music and musicians), and it is upon her initials that the composer based the opening motive of the *Partita*. Mr. Pattison has fur-

nished, in the accompanying booklet, a careful and scholarly analysis of the music, which should do much to make the work interesting and valuable for students and music lovers.

The odd side contains a transcription by Jacques Gordon for violin and piano from *Peacocks* (*Les Paons*) from four melodies for voice and piano. It is an interesting bit of music and is played with musicianly penetration.

—W. K.

MOZART: *String Quartet in B flat Major*, K. 589; played by the Perole String Quartet. Musicraft discs, Nos. 1001-2, price \$3.

IN 1789 and 1790 Mozart wrote three quartets for King Frederick William II of Prussia, in which he gave favored treatment to the cello, the King's favorite instrument. None of these works is as inspired as the series dedicated to Haydn, yet the *D major*, K-575, and the *B flat Major*, K-589, have their moments of inspired loveliness. It is a curious fact that most writers on Mozart stress the lack of inspiration in these three works, finding them largely academic, concentrated and ungrateful, but a study of the scores of the first two and several hearings of these works have brought us to the conclusion that most writers overstate the case against these quartets. It will be admitted that the *B flat Major* starts with an unpretentious theme, and that the cello executes too many florid solo passages, yet the Mozartean grace and fluency and not a little of his charm are noticeable here. Perhaps the development section has not the closely knit balance that the more famous *Hunting Quartet*, also in *B flat*, owns, yet it too is musically effective. Undoubtedly the high cello melody in the *Larghetto* makes this movement seem more artificial than it should, yet is there not true Mozartean charm in its pleasant tunefulness? The *Trio* of the *Minuet*, on the other hand, shows the composer's inventive skill, and so too does the finale.

In presenting the Perole String Quartet in a recording, Musicraft have selected one of the oldest and best known organizations of its kind in radio. They play the present work as though they enjoyed it, with admirable linear balance and singing quality. Theirs is not a large tone, nor one which possesses great warmth. As a matter of fact, it is a somewhat attenuated one, and, in the case of the first violinist, one that tends towards brilliancy rather than fervor. The re-



cording here lacks depth, but, since the cello part is almost all written high, it is on the whole equitable for this quartet.

—P. H. R.

### VOCAL

GRIEG: *Ich Liebe Dich*, and *Ein Traum*; sung by Kirsten Flagstad, accompanied at the piano by Edwin McArthur. 10 inch Victor, 1804, price \$1.50.

WE believe that these two Grieg songs — (along with her earlier *Bruennhilde's Cry*) are the best capturing, to date, of Mme. Flagstad's voice and artistry. Here we get the bigness, the surety, and much of the velvet of the heroic soprano, and can see the fidelity with which the singer follows her score. We get Grieg not personalized by another.

*Ich liebe dich* was autobiographical with Grieg; in it he poured out his adoration and devotion to the woman who was soon to become his wife. It is surprising to find a Norwegian who chooses von Holstein's German translation in preference to Hans C. Andersen's own Danish text.

The text of *Ein Traum*, by Frederich von Bodenstedt (better known as Mirza Schaffy) is in the Heine tradition; Finck thought that in setting it Grieg made his finest contribution to the concert platform. In the first stanza the poet tells us his dream of wooing a golden haired maiden in a forest glade amid romantic surroundings; the second stanza is a paean of joy when the dream becomes a reality, and here the music attains a thrilling climax.

Edwin McArthur's accompaniments are too small scaled to give the singer the support we should expect.

—A. P. D.

\* \* \* \*

HAGEMAN: *Caponsacchi*, *This Very Vivid Morn*, and *Lullaby*; sung by Helen Jepson, with orchestra conducted by Alexander Smallens. Victor 14183, price \$2.00.

RICHARD HAGEMAN'S *Caponsacchi* is to be the first American opera that Edward Johnson will produce at the Metropolitan, and Helen Jepson, who here gives two Act II arias, is scheduled to sing the lead in the performance. The play *Caponsacchi*, by Arthur Goodrich and Rose A. Palmer, is based on the plot and partly on the

lines of Browning's *The Ring and the Book*. The aria *This Very Vivid Morn*, from Act II, Sc. 2 of the play, corresponds somewhat to the lines around number 1200 in the *Pompilia* section of the poem. *Pompilia* tells of her husband's hatred and her fear of him; then follows an annunciation scene, with a proclamation of new hope, now that she knows that she is to become a mother.

The *Lullaby*, Act II, Sc. 3 in the play, shows *Pompilia* stopping on the road to Rome, and taking the child of the stranger, *Marinetta*, singing it to sleep with all the tenderness she already feels for her own unborn child. She is confident that God will protect her, a mother.

Hageman's music for these two arias has melodic interest, seems well adapted to the lyrical and dramatic lines, and structurally shows not so much an individual idiom as a familiarity with early twentieth century Italian vocal writing and the Wagnerian orchestra. This disc should be the harbinger of a likeable new operatic score.

Miss Jepson's work is better than in the recent *Thais* and *Louise* arias. The voice is fresh, and when not forced has a natural and sympathetic quality. The diction requires more attention; only isolated words and phrases now come through. The playing and recording of Smallen's orchestra is thoroughly acceptable.

—A. P. D.

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PURCELL: *Dido and Aeneas* — *When I am laid in earth*; and SADERO (Arr.): *Sicilian cart driver's song*; sung by Blanche Marchesi, soprano, with piano accompaniment by Agnes Bedford. International Record Collectors' Club, ten-inch disc, No. 89, price \$2.00 (Autographed).

BLANCHE, daughter of the great Mathilde Marchesi (the vocal Leopold Auer of the great days of the *Prima donna*) has long been well known in her own right both as singer and teacher. Last summer, at the age of seventy-three, she made a series of private recordings in England, her adopted home; and two of the selections are now made available in this country in a limited autographed edition, exclusively issued by the International Record Collectors' Club, 313 Reservoir Avenue, Bridgeport, Conn.

Blanche Marchesi was never noted as the possessor of a great voice, but rather as one of the first of the great song interpreters.

According to legend, her mother once said to a gifted but lazy pupil, "If your voice and my daughter's art could be combined in one person, she would be the greatest singer the world has ever known." Bearing this in mind, and remembering the singer's age, the sound which we hear from this record is scarcely credible — for here the voice is rich, smooth and pleasing. To say that she sings like a young woman would, of course, be to overstate the case, but there is a depth of feeling, a stylistic breadth, a fine legato and splendid English diction, in *Dido's* noble lament, which more than compensate for occasional shortness of breath and not quite certain intonation. The most serious flaw is the singer's rather loose regard for dotted notes.

The *Sicilian Cart Driver's Song* is less taxing music, though it reveals unsuspected coloratura technique and an enviable trill. The artist has obviously made this song her own, and the record will have a distinct appeal quite apart from its historical value. The recording was done by HMV, which is sufficient recommendation.

It is certainly not inappropriate that the companion release of the Club should present repressings of two selections sung by one of the elder Marchesi's most illustrious pupils — Emma Eames. In this case, of course, the singer was young and the recording is old — dating back something like thirty years. Bemberg's *Chanson des baisers* and the aria *Voi lo sapete* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* are the titles.

—P. M.

**SPIRITUALS:** *Go Down Moses*, and *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord*; sung by Marian Anderson, with piano accompaniments by Kosti Vehanen. 10-inch Victor, 1799, price \$1.50.

**M**ARIAN ANDERSON'S new offering is two of the spirituals of her race. Harry T. Burleigh's arrangement of *Go Down Moses* is one of the most moving expressions of primitive Christian religion. *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord* is not so genuine, probably because Florence B. Price's arrangement seems overdone in the elaborate piano accompaniment that supports the plaintive melody, and in the theatrical ending that is out of keeping with the rest of the voice part. Again Marian Anderson's dark appealing voice fascinates us, and her simplicity wins our admiration. Kosti Vehanen catches the syncopation of the piano part of the second song and plays brilliantly. The recording is good.

—A. P. D.

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PUCCINI: *La Boheme* (Act IV Complete); performed by a Covent Garden cast and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set 274 (discs 68771-74). Price \$6.00.

WE are fortunate in securing on discs a complete act of *Boheme* as conducted by that veteran opera director Sir Thomas Beecham. The three outstanding qualities of this set are the stress on lyricism in both singing and orchestra, the beautiful concentration on ensemble work, and the particularly clear and sweet recording.

It is probably to Sir Thomas that we are indebted for the discrimination in choosing the following cast:

Mimi .....	Lisa Perli
Rodolfo .....	Heddle Nash
Marcello .....	John Brownlee
Musetta .....	Stella Andreva
Colline .....	Robert Easton
Schaunard .....	Robert Alva

Lisa Perli is our record friend Dora La-bette and we find her an ideal Mimi. Her easily produced and smooth voice is poised exactly to suit Mimi's music. She sings the part with infinite pathos and with a rare sense of timing and deliberation. Every phrase is distinguished. Her worthy Rodolfo is Heddle Nash, whom we continue to admire for his sweet, expressive tenor and a musicianship such as few tenors possess.

Stella Andreva and John Brownlee are two of this season's British recruits for the Metropolitan Opera. In Musetta's short scenes we hear a large, brilliant and warm voice, with a finesse in dynamics. In Marcello's measures we welcome the fine full baritone that could be expected in a protégé of Melba.

Robert Easton is a genuine find, with a big resonant basso whose quality recalls the fabulous beauty suggested in the old Plancon records. The *Coat Song* is superb. Robert Alva has little chance to make himself known.

"*Con amore*" might be the motto for Beecham's conducting, the London Philharmonic's playing, and the singing of each member of the cast. The result is as fine a performance of *Boheme* Act IV as we are ever likely to hear, always well knit, free flowing, and utterly devoid of exaggeration and distracting mannerisms.

Lisa Perli does not receive credit on the label for her delightful *Addio*, which fills in the eighth side in the set.

—A. P. D.

SIBELIUS: *Slända*, and *Aus banger Brust*; sung by Eva Leoni, accompanied at the piano by Jacques Pintel. Columbia 9123-M, price \$1.50.

EVA LEONI is a coloratura who has been making phonograph records for many years, and her voice is still, as on the old black label Victor discs, small, whitish, accurate and cold. These qualities stood her in good stead for light coloratura, but they are not what we want for the warm feeling of these two Sibelius songs.

*Slända* (*A Dragon-Fly*), with Swedish words by Oscar Levertin, relates how a bright dragon-fly flew in and brought a breath of summer to the lonely and sad singer; it momentarily banished his unhappiness, and then flew away again. Sibelius has a delightful phrase to suggest its flight. Mme. Leoni's singing is neat and her trill good, but she does not make the song hang together.

*Aus banger Brust*, with words from Dehmel's *Weib und Welt*, is a voluptuous love-song that in its words suggests *La Chevelure*. Mme. Leoni, unfortunately, fails completely to bring it to life.

—A. P. D.

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STARS OF THE METROPOLITAN. Operatic selections sung by Lawrence Tibbett, Lily Pons, Richard Crooks, Helen Jepson, Lauritz Melchior, Lotte Lehmann, John Charles Thomas, Lucrezia Bori and Giovanni Martinelli. Victor set No. M-329, five discs, price \$10.00.

UNDOUBTEDLY there will be a large public for this album set, particularly among those people who listen to the weekly broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera. And since the most successful recordings are those related to the new order of the library in albums, the idea of assembling a group of operatic recordings under one cover has its greater sales possibilities.

On the whole, the singers and the selections are well chosen. I would except Miss Jepson, however, whose *Depuis le jour* from *Louise* has been included, because, despite the beauty of her voice, she lacks expressive variety and ease in her delivery of this difficult aria.

The album contains Tibbett's recordings of the *Chanson du Toreador* from *Carmen* and the *Largo al Factotum* from *Barbiere di Siviglia* (disc 1); Lily Pons' recording of *Caro nome* from *Rigoletto* and Richard Crooks' re-

cording of *Le Reve* from *Manon* (disc 2); Jepson's recording of *Depuis le jour* from *Louise* and Melchior's recording of the *Liebeslied* from *Die Walküre* (disc 3); Lotte Lehmann's recording of *Der Manner Sippe* from *Die Walküre* coupled with John Charles Thomas' recording of *Di Provenza il Mar* from *La Traviata* (disc 4); and Bori's recording of *Mi chiamano Mimi* from *La Boheme* coupled with Martinelli's *Celeste Aida* from *Aida* (disc 5). Most of these selections are higher-fidelity recordings, but some date back several years. As examples of the different singers' artistry, they are on the whole satisfactory. —P. H. R.

VERDI: *Ballo in Maschera, Ma dall'Arido Stelo, and Morro, ma Prima in Grazia*; sung by Gina Cigna, with orchestra. Columbia 9122-M, price \$1.50.

GRAMOPHILES may steal a march on opera attenders, and before she makes her Metropolitan debut hear the new Italian dramatic soprano Gina Cigna, who has been brought here in high expectations to take over the roles relinquished by Rosa Ponselle. This record carries Amelia's arias from Acts II and III of *The Masked Ball*.

The voice is meaty, of wide range, with well developed chest tones and a brilliant top. When not pushed the quality is sweet, but ordinarily the singer seems more concerned with revealing the dramatic aspects of the music than with sensuous tone *per se*. She excites us, but does not quite give us an impression of ease when she opens up forte on a high B flat and C flat. As with nearly all Italian singers her art is bold and obvious, seldom subtle. She has the flair that should assure her an outstanding success on our operatic stage.

*Ma dall'Arido Stelo* occurs when Amelia wanders in a field near the gallows searching for a magic herb to cure her love for Richard. She is frightened as the bell tolls midnight and she seems a figure approaching dimly through the mist. In *Morro*, Amelia maintains her innocence, and begs her husband, before he kills her, to allow her to embrace their young son once again.

Verdi of course wrote music suited to these highly melodramatic scenes. With the arduous Cigna and powerful recording this disc is a knockout example of mid-nineteenth century Italian opera. The total effect recalls the passage from the Gospel of St. Luke: "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." —A. P. D.

## VIOLIN

BACH: *Partita No. 2, in D minor* (5 sides); played by Nathan Milstein, unaccompanied. 3 Columbia discs, Set 276, price \$4.00.

NATHAN MILSTEIN this month enriches the Columbia catalogue with the most awe-inspiring of the Bach *Sonatas* for unaccompanied violin. The work is twice listed in the Victor catalogue — as *Sonata No. 4*, by Adolf Busch, and as *Partita No. 2*, by Yehudi Menuhin. This new Milstein set has one very strong point in its favor — it is the least expensive of the three, costing just half the price of the Menuhin. Milstein takes



PHILIP MILLER

fewer record sides, playing without repeats and at generally faster *tempi*.

The cardinal virtues in the playing of Bach, aside from sheer technical competence, are a logical rhythmic sense and a feeling for counterpoint. Allied, as in the cases of both Milstein and Menuhin, to a smooth and rich tone, these qualities bring out the eloquence of the music. In Busch we miss the suavity of the younger players, and the recording of his playing (done a number of years ago) is not too flattering.

It is fascinating to make a direct comparison of the Menuhin and Milstein sets. At the outset one is struck by the greater expansive-

ness and warmth of Menuhin's playing. His *Allemande* is done at a more leisurely pace than Milstein's, and his time is generally steadier. Milstein indulges more in *rubato*, and, while he never loses the feeling of his beat, his conception lacks the impact implicit in that of Menuhin. On the other hand the *Courante* finds Menuhin the more vigorous of the two. In the *Gigue* Milstein is faster and more brilliant, but Menuhin makes more of the contrapuntal design. The big test comes, of course, in the *Chaconne*. An idea of the variation in *tempo* will be given by the fact that Menuhin takes four sides as opposed to Milstein's three. In the playing of the opening chords Milstein is a bit smoother, but in the later arpeggios Menuhin is again more successful with the contrapuntal lines. In short, it is Milstein's misfortune not to come first in the field, for were there no choice to make, his playing would be found more than satisfactory. As it is, the question before the buyer, if he happens to agree with my conclusions, is whether the superiority of Menuhin is worth an extra four dollars. Mechanically the records may be considered as equal.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

WEINER: *Gypsy Fantasy*, and *Shadows of the Past* (*Gypsy Folk Song*); played by Michael Weiner, violinist, accompanied at the piano by Emil Konevsky. Columbia 7334-M, price \$1.25.

SEVERAL months ago, Michael Weiner gave us two samples of his gypsy music, and the two numbers on this disc have the same characteristic tears and laughter. The fiddler and the fiddle are one; the fused pair render unadulterated emotion in projecting the music's melancholy and in dashing off its reckless *bravura*. This is surely amazing fiddling. Emil Konevsky's accompaniments are modest. The recording is brilliant.

A. P. D.

## HARPSICHORD

BACH: *Italian Concerto* (3 parts), and *Fugue in C Minor* from *The Musical Offering* (1 side); played by Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichordist. Two Musicraft discs, Nos. 1006-7, price \$3.00.

IT was a master stroke on the part of the newly formed Musicraft Record Company to sign up Ralph Kirkpatrick, an outstanding

musician in his particular field. Few who have heard Mr. Kirkpatrick perform Bach's music forget the event quickly, for the harpsichordist's artistic objectivism provides a musical experience of a very high order. It is the simplicity of his style, coupled with his assurance and his digital fluency which makes his artistry so enjoyable.

A harpsichord recording of Bach's *Italian Concerto* has long been needed, particularly in this country. An existent piano version has never been satisfactory, since it is rendered with scholastic precision, but scarcely with the fluency and élan that the piece requires. For the *Italian Concerto*, despite its *cantabile* middle section, is essentially a *bravura* piece.

This composition, first published in the year 1735, appeared in the second part of Bach's *Piano-Practice*. The title of the original edition read: "Second part of Piano-Practice, consisting of a Concert according to Italian taste, and an Overture in French style, for a clavichord with two keyboards. Composed for lovers of music, as a delectation of the mind, by J. S. Bach, Musical Conductor to His Serene Highness the Prince of Saxe-Weissenfels, etc." The work is mostly lively in style with much florid decoration. It consists of three movements, an *Allegro*, in which the bass and treble parts are treated with equal prominence and an *Andante*, in which the treble part in graceful flowing lines is played *forte* against a bass marked *quasi violino*, which is played *pianissimo*. This is a mode of writing which Bach also employed in a number of his keyboard *Preludes*. The last movement, a *Presto*, is unusually brilliant; here again the hands are evenly matched.

The performance of this work by Mr. Kirkpatrick is all we would expect from an artist of his calibre. The recording, which we understand he finds faithful to his musicianship, is not, however, in our estimation, as successful. Of course, it must be admitted his instrument is somewhat different in character than that employed by Miss Pessl and that used by Mme. Landowska, as comparison with their recordings will quickly attest. In the first and final movements, the bass line is not defined as clearly as it should be or, for that matter, as it is in the *Fugue* he plays from the *Musical Offering*.

The *Fugue* dates from Bach's last years. It was written in 1747, and is based on a theme given to him by Frederick the Great, whom Bach visited at his palace in Potsdam



in the Spring of that year. Frederick's original theme, upon which he asked the composer to extemporize a six part fugue, is used by Bach as the subject of one of his most profound and elaborate fugues. On his return to Leipsig, Bach wrote the present composition, and with a trio for flute, violin and clavier and some canons, he despatched the whole to the King as a *Musical Offering*. Mr. Kirkpatrick performs it with splendid incisiveness. Here the recording is in our estimation decidedly more successful than in the first and third movements of the *Italian Concerto*.

—P. H. R.

## PIANO

FAURE: 1. *Prelude in D minor, No. 5*; 2. *Fifth Impromptu in F sharp minor*; and SEVERAC: *Cerdaña — No. 5, "Le retour des muletiers"*; played by Robert Casadesus. Columbia disc, No. 68853-D, price \$1.50.

WITH this release Fauré makes his bow to the American record-buying public as a composer for piano. He wrote, of course, prolifically in this field, and his works for the instrument are highly regarded by those who know them, but to audiences in this country they will come as practically a novelty. Columbia is in a position to do some pioneer work by importing the masters of the various Fauré pieces recorded by its French affiliates.

The fifth *Prelude*, which comes from the set of ten comprising Op. 103, is a study in contrast. After a passionate opening in alternate twos and threes, the storm and stress gradually die down. The close is serene and very Fauréan. The fifth *Impromptu* is Op. 102, and is founded on a three note motive and a running figure. There is a feverishness about this music which is rare in the works of its composer but the formal perfection and ordered development are unmistakably here. This is music which will grow with repeated hearings. The *Prelude* dates from 1911, and the *Impromptu* from 1909.

Though we might have wished for more Fauré, we can hardly quarrel with the coupling. Déodat de Séverac's *Le retour des muletiers* is the fifth and final number in a set of *Etudes pittoresques* for piano, called *Cerdaña*. These delightful pieces are impressions of the Catalan province where the composer spent considerable time. Séverac was a tone painter in the truest sense of the term, a sensitive musician who built on the solid rock of folk-

## COLUMBIA OFFERS

PUCCINI: *La Bohème—Act IV (Complete)* and "Addio" — Act III (Sung in Italian); Lisa Perli, Heddle Nash, John Brownlee, Stella Andrevá, Robert Alva and Robert Easton. Under the direction of Sir Thomas Beecham with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Set No. 274 and AM 274.

The finest operatic set recorded to date—that can honestly be said of this artistic achievement by an "All Star" cast. Lisa Perli (Dora Labbette) makes an ideal "Mimi" revealing a pathetic portrayal. John Brownlee and Stella Andrevá make their Metropolitan debuts soon. Beecham has molded the entire performance into perfection!

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Symphony No. 6 in B Minor ("Pathétique")* Paris Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Philippe Gaubert. Set No. 277 and AM 277.

Tschaikowsky's *Pathétique* Symphony needs no introduction. It has been a favorite on records and with the new and vital up-to-date recording here offered a renewed interest will arise. Here is an interpretation of an emotional kind in which there is relief from the studied gloom usually presented in renditions.

BACH: *Partita No. 2, in D Minor, For Unaccompanied Violin*. Nathan Milstein (Violinist). Set No. 276 and AM 276.

The *Partita* containing the famous "Chaconne" is now recorded by the masterful and technically perfect violinist, Milstein.

LOEFFLER: *Partita For Violin and Piano*, and PEACOCK'S ("Les Paons"). Jacques Gordon (Violin) and Lee Pattison (Piano). Set No. 275 and AM 275.

Loeffler's music has been unknown on records and the *Partita* marks the record debut of this composer's music. An outstanding chamber work that is a worthy tribute to a man who was a striking figure in Boston's musical life.

WAGNER: *Die Meistersinger — Overture*. Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra. No. 68854-D.

A new thriller by Sir Thomas! The nearest thing to perfection that can be imagined!

COLUMBIA  
Phonograph Co., Inc.  
New York City



song. Perhaps no composer is quite so "regional" as he, for he took delight in depicting in tones the various localities which appealed to him. His music deserves to be better known than it is in this country, and one can only regret that the whole of the *Cerdaña* suite has not been recorded. Blanche Selva, whose biography of the composer is the finest tribute yet paid him, once recorded the striking *Les muletiers devant le Christ de Livia*, but I believe the record, which was made in France, is now out of print.

Casadesus has by this time established himself in the United States as one of the best pianists, and it was a foregone conclusion that he would play this music superlatively well. The record is remarkable for clarity and richness.

—P. M.

\* \* \* \*

**BACH:** *Transcribed for the Piano* by Alexander Kelberine, played by Miss Jeanne Behrend and Albert Kelberine. *Herzlich thut mich verlangen, Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, Er denket der Barmherzigkeit, Ertödt uns durch dein Güte, Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr, Komm, süßer Tod, Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, Aus der Tiefe rufe ich, Prelude in E Major; and Two Pianos, Adagio from Organ Toccata in C Major, Nun, komm, der Heiden Heiland.* Victor Album 330, 4 ten inch, 2 twelve inch records, price \$10.00.

**THE** transcriptions contained in this volume are unusual, both for the excellent manner of performance by the two talented artists who, in private life are Mr. and Mrs. Kelberine, and for the remarkable musicianship with which Mr. Kelberine suffused his own piano versions. The playing by both is sturdy, sharply defined, and tempered by the necessary distribution of nuances. Mr. Kelberine is a devoted student of Bach, as his transcriptions easily reveal. He possesses a sensitive feeling for the master's polyphonic documentation, striving at all times to bring to the music an added glow of his own warm personality.

These transcriptions are by no means simple to play: one requires an agile finger technique to span all the difficulties; but, then, Mr. Kelberine is first the artist, the musician, and second the virtuoso. He makes no pretense to astound us with pyrotechnics which are found so frequently in his transcriptions of Bach's music by Liszt and Busoni. Neither are they so simple, however, as to make them

elementary studies for the ambitious student. All in all, these transcriptions, several of which (*Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr, Komm, süßer Tod, Aus der Tiefe rufe ich*), have been so beautifully orchestrated by Leopold Stokowski, will please the discriminating music-lover; and, at the same time, they take their place in the category of interesting contributions to the revised piano literature of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Mr. Kelberine plays with broad sweep, and his transcriptions are so devised that they reveal his breadth at its best. He enunciates each voice clearly and firmly, with no undue emphasis on one subject to the detriment of another.

He has chosen many diverse examples to show his range of musicianship, extracting material from several cantatas, organ preludes, a violin partita.

Miss Jeanne Behrend is an excellent pianist, gifted with much musicianship and, fortunately, no showmanship; a quality which, in the case of Bach, would obviously be a blemish. She has a warm feeling for the music, playing her allotment of compositions with care and beauty.

Both Mr. Kelberine and Miss Behrend have concertized as a duo-piano team in Philadelphia, where they live, and in other cities. Examples of their fine collaboration are made manifest in two numbers, included in this album: the *Adagio* from the *Organ Toccata in C Major* (available also by Arthur Rubinstein, who presents the entire work on Victor records, and the *Adagio*, as orchestrated by Stokowski), and *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (Stokowski has also given us an orchestral version of this moving *Organ Choral Prelude*). If these be specimens of their playing, then they certainly should record other works for two pianos. The literature for two pianos is, unfortunately, small; but there are certain works extant which would be decidedly welcome to the many record collectors. With such a twain of worthwhile artists at the instruments, we can be certain, at least, of excellent playing and sincere musicianship.

The recording is of the usual high standards, and the pianos emerge with crystalline sonority in all the pieces.

—W. K.

\* \* \* \*

**DEBUSSY:** *Sarabande, and Menuet*; played by George Copeland, pianist. Victor 14202, price \$2.00.

**GEORGE COPELAND**, more than any other pianist, was the prophet who went through this country some twenty-odd years

ago winning new converts to Debussy's music, and it is fair that we should now have permanently on records his conception and interpretation of the pieces. We acknowledge his full grasp of the fabric of the music, and the unconcerned ease with which he plays it. The playing is on the dry rather than the imaginative side.

The *Sarabande*, from the Suite for Piano, containing *Prelude*, *Sarabande*, *Toccata*, is subdued and stately, and a bit cold. Copeland's tone is not incisive in recording, and his rhythm for a dance is free.

The *Menuet* from the *Suite Bergamasque*, not the No. 3 from the *Petite Suite* that the label calls it, is rendered *très délicatement* and with a gentle humor. Copeland has an unnecessary tendency to hasten a *crescendo*. The A's of the final measure, if played, did not record.

—A. P. D.

## HARP

PIERNE: *Impromptu-caprice*, Op. 9; and ROUSSEAU: *Variations pastorales*, played by Mildred Dilling, harpist. Columbia disc, No. 8852-D, price \$1.50.

THE harpist's repertoire is an extremely limited one, and at best the instrument is not one to be listened to for long stretches of time: indeed one wonders how the old-fashioned conception of Heaven could have seemed so desirable to our forefathers. However, when well played and presenting idiomatic and interesting music, this instrument can give real pleasure. Furthermore, there are a number of important composers who have written music for the harp.

On her latest disc, Miss Dilling gives us an example of early Pierné. It is a Lisztian conception, with a sweeping melody and a variety of *glissando* and *arpeggio* effects. There is a well-constructed climax, of which the artist takes full advantage.

The reverse presents a new composer — Marcel Samuel Rousseau (or Marcel Auguste Louis, as he was christened) born in 1882, son of Samuel Alexandre Rousseau, himself a well-known composer. The works of the son include operas, incidental music, piano pieces, etc., as well as a suite called *Noël Berrichon*, which bears an obvious relation to the work under consideration. He won the second Grand Prix de Rome in 1905.

The *Variations pastorales* are subtitled *Pastoral variations on an old Noël*, but this seems

like an understatement. The G minor theme with which the work opens has a familiar ring — though possibly because it is so very typical. After undergoing the usual changes it finally emerges at the end in a major version of the minor carol, *Plaines, bois, arbres, arbrisseaux* — which leads me to believe that there is more than one Noël in question. The harp writing is skillful and effective, and the variations are well differentiated.

Miss Dilling again proves herself equal to the demands of the music, though the Rousseau piece, especially at the beginning, seems slightly wanting in definition. This may be due to the recording, or possibly to the fact that the review copy has more than the usual amount of surface noise. This does not apply to the Pierné, however, as here playing and recording are completely satisfactory.

—P. M.

## GUITAR

OYANGUREN: *Arabia*, and *Andalucia* — played on the guitar by the composer. 10 inch Columbia, 17080-D, price \$1.00.

THE recording has faithfully caught on this record Senor Julio Martinez Oyanguren's amazing command of tonal resources and his virtuosity in making the guitar do big things. *Arabia* and *Andalucia* abound in local color and are guitaresque, but this reviewer, for one, will not choose them for frequent company.

—A. P. D.

### THE AMERICAN RECORD COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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## CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Peter Hugh Reed, Editor  
The American Music Lover.

Dear Mr. Reed:

I was very much interested in your article on needles, and I think that more articles of this type should be published. You mention the subject of needle alignment. Very little attention is paid to this important subject in this country, practically none of the pick-ups having any correction made at all. The straight tone arm is very seriously out of line both at the beginning and at the end of a record, especially at the end of a long record, with the usual mounting. If the head is turned inward from the tone-arm axis, the alignment can be very greatly improved.

A simple experiment will show this qualitatively. Place the needle about 4 inches from the center pin. Hold a piece of cardboard or a ruler on the tone arm in such a way that the edge passes over the needle and over the center of the pin. Holding the cardboard or ruler firmly to the tone arm, move the latter back and forth and note how much the edge moves from the center pin. Change the angle of the edge to the tone arm, making sure that it passes over the center of the pin when the needle is about 4 inches from the pin, and move the tone arm in the same way. It will be found that the best results are obtained, not when the edge is perpendicular to the tone arm, but when it is inclined at an angle of 10 to 25 degrees from the perpendicular. (The shorter tone arms require larger angles).

In Great Britain the manufacturers pay much more attention to this detail, owing to *The Gramophone* and its readers. I think that perhaps *The American Music Lover* could bring about an improvement in the U. S. A.

I like your magazine very much, and I think it is improving with every issue.

Yours truly,

J. KENNETH W. MACALPINE.

East Orange, N. J., January 19, 1937.

\* \* \*

To the Editor of The American Music Lover:

The passing away on January 15th of George Edward Pelkey, of St. Albans, Vermont, removed one of the most charming personalities from the ranks of the record collecting fraternity. In his occasional letters to the phonographic press here and abroad George Pelkey always had novel and valuable contributions to make. Indeed, his friendly, helpful disposition often was expressed in refreshingly unusual action, but its soundness of purpose invariably became evident after the element of surprise had subsided.

It is apropos to recount here the occasion when George Pelkey made a gift of a record to a record dealer, coals-to-Newcastle fashion. How many copies of that record the dealer had seen and handled without ever having heard is impossible to estimate, but coming as a gift from George Pelkey, he felt he had to listen to it at least once, anyway. To his astonishment and infinite delight he found himself captivated by a rarely enjoyable composition recorded with almost photographic sharpness of detail. Bass and contra-bass were impressively correct. Today the dealer uses the record as a showpiece.

It is believed that there is not a record collector living to whom this record would not be a joy.

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For all to own copies of it would be a fitting memorial to a man who lived with death ever beside him but remained unafraid, cheerful and devoted to beauty in all its forms to the very last. The record is Telefunken B1235 — A Hungarian Rhapsody by the renowned David Popper. The 'cellist is Emanuel Feuermann. He is assisted by an orchestra consisting of members of the Berlin Philharmonic. It is a ten-inch record priced by most dealers at \$1.00. Popper's composition covers both faces of it.

Sincerely,

ALBERT J. FRANCK.

## EDITORIAL

(Continued from Page 326)

to record a whole album of Bach's keyboard music. No one, for example, would have done greater justice to the *Well-Tempered Clavier* than he. However, the legacies he left us are not to be ignored, but rather to be treasured as true collector's items.

Harold Samuel worked his way to fortune and fame. Born in 1879 in London, his early life was spent in poverty. He studied music at the Royal College of Music and made his debut at fifteen. His reputation as a pianist was established early in his performances with the leading orchestras of the British Isles. In 1930, he came to the Yale School of Music in this country where he conducted a class for the study of Bach. Subsequently he was highly praised by Professor Donovan as "being the most influential single agent in bringing about the understanding and appreciation of Bach's music in this country." Samuel's Bach concerts in New York and elsewhere have always been regarded by leading critics as among a season's most important and outstanding events.

A new record company has been formed. It is known as Musicraft Records, Inc. The first releases include Bach's *Italian Concerto*, played by Ralph Kirkpatrick, the American harpsichordist, and Mozart's *String Quartet in B flat major, K-598*, played by the Perole String Quartet of radio fame.

Musicraft, we are given to understand, is going to devote themselves entirely to the distribution of good music. They are going to concentrate their efforts on chamber music, and on that section of music which lies between chamber and symphonic music. Since theirs is a worthy endeavor we wish them good fortune.

\* \* \*

Because of illness Mr. Archetti's *Swing Music Notes* are held over until next month.

# Record Collector's Corner

By JULIAN MORTON MOSES

**M**OST readily understood, perhaps, of all excuses for the collecting of historical records is that of preserving an important interpretation. Even those who scoff at other aspects of the hobby seem to appreciate the value of having an operatic premiere captured for all time, though it does not follow that those who boasted the creation of leading roles are necessarily the greatest exponents of the personages they embodied. Were STORCHIO and ZENATELLO, the creators of *Butterfly* and *Pinkerton* (La Scala — February 14, 1904), superior, for instance to DESTINN and CARUSO who introduced the opera to London (July 10, 1905)? Yet, the records of the first two are unquestionably more in demand, though I might hazard the guess that were they not *Fonotipias*, and scarce ones at that, the difference in value would be slight. However, anyone who approaches his collection from a musician's standpoint would desire all the mentioned interpretations and that of FARRAR as well since it was she who first sang the title part at the Metropolitan Opera (February 11, 1907). It is sad to note therefore, that, complete as this phonographic representation seems to be, neither the original *Sharpless*, DE LUCA, nor BELLATI who sang at the revised Brescia performance (May 28 1904) appear to have recorded any of the duets or concerted pieces, there being no baritone solo in the score (there is a possibility that the latter, whose name was common on the 1905-06 Columbia lists, may have assisted at an "Ora a noi" or something).

Outside of roles with which they are identified by creating or through long association, all singers have made attempts, often unsuccessful but interesting enough to make us wish they had been preserved on recorded surfaces. Imagine telling your friends that you were going to play the last act of *Siegfried* with Nellie Melba as *Bruennhilde*, or asking them to choose between Patti's "Seguidilla" from *Carmen* or "Ritorna vincitor" from *Aida*. Evanescent as these triumphs (?) may have been, they do not bear testimony to an age of versatility somewhat removed from contemporary times when the leading Wagnerian singer (unlike Lilli Lehmann) can't seem to learn *Norma* and an outstanding American tenor spends tortuous years over each new part, when the very darlings of our native pride vie with one another in alternating *Pagliacci* and *Herodiade* year in, year out on the radio.

Some sense of the above state of affairs must have been engendered by Mr. Cedric Wallis's well deserved panegyric of EMMA CALVE (December issue of *The American Music Lover*). Unfortunately, only her double-faced records, made originally for Victor, were mentioned. A better appreciation of her eclectic art would have been gained if her early *Pathe* and *G&T* recordings had been included.

Among the latter, the *Voi lo sapete* from *Cavalleria* (3286) and the *Habanera* from *Carmen* (3281) are superior to the ones mentioned, the last being better even on her 1907 *Victor* record with orchestral accompaniment (88086). Still, her all-embracing achievements were well described and those who read the article will welcome Mr. Seltsam's issue of Calve's *In questa tomba oscura* and *Scene des cartes* from *Carmen* on a ten-inch disc.

The IRCC is also about to release the recordings which BLANCHE MARCHESI made in London last year. They include two selections from sixteenth and seventeenth century England, the first by no less a personage than the royal Anne Boleyn and the other by a less noble but somewhat more musical individual named Purcell. A third number is the *Sicilian cart driver's* song, with which John Charles Thomas usually proves that he is absolutely perfect for some things even if those things aren't *Masked Balls*. To complete the fourth side a re-recording was made of Marchesi's 1906 *L' Eté* by Chaminade. A better choice, I believe, would have been any one of the following, all released in July 1906 by the German branch of the *Gramophone and Typewriter Company*:

*Bist du bei mir* (Bach) 43766; *Se saran rose* (Arditi) 53439; *Tosca, vissi d' arte* 53440; *Cavalleria, voi lo sapete* 53441.

One thing remained to be discussed in this somewhat meandering column and that is the question of just when the Victor Talking Machine Company first adopted its so-called Grand Prize label. I have saved this bit of controversial matter for the last in order to give those not particularly interested in such technical affairs the chance to desist from reading further without missing anything of importance (sic) to them. Seriously, though, there are many who would rather my remarks be confined to like factual details and, considering some of my extravagant linguistics, I can't much blame them. So to attempt to appease them, we now return to Grand Prizes which, of course, refer to the St. Louis Exposition. Mention was made of the award in the January 1905 supplement but the label change was not yet in effect though it may have been contemplated. Beginning in February, no further seven-inch records were issued and the next month saw some of the ten inch and twelve inch black face releases with numbers starting from 4250 and 31350 garbed in their new apparel. All red seals from April 1900 on (Nos. 81053 and 85041 respectively) appear with Victor Grand Prize labels. By December 1, 1905, all vestiges of the Monarch and De Luxe labels were removed, the labelotomy having been successful (doctors, please note).



# Radio Notes

## RCA-NBC TELEVISION TESTS ON 441 LINE STANDARD

The first tests of high definition television using the new standards which have been recommended by the radio industry to the Federal Communications Commission are now being conducted by engineers of the Radio Corporation of America and the National Broadcasting Company, it was announced by Lenox R. Lohr, President of NBC.

Images scanned by the RCA Iconoscope, the pick-up tube, at the rate of 441 lines per frame have been transmitted from the NBC experimental station in the Empire State Tower and successfully received by a selected number of experimental television receivers in the homes of RCA-NBC engineers and technicians.

"Pictures of 441 line definition are much clearer than those of 343 lines, the definition employed in previous tests from the Empire State," said Mr. Lohr. "Another significant advance has been made in our work of television development. As we proceed in this fascinating adventure of bringing radio sight to distant eyes, it is encouraging to be able to report this substantial progress."

"The development of television service," said Mr. Lohr, "promises to be orderly and evolutionary in character and is a tribute to the radio industry which has enjoyed public favor on a scale that is most encouraging to its future. The public may purchase present day radio receiving sets with confidence as to their continuing serviceability. Television receiving sets cannot precede a television program service of satisfactory quality, which will be available at the beginning only in sharply restricted metropolitan areas following the eventual solution of technical, economic and program problems."

\* \* \*

## "MAN IN THE STREET" MOST INTERVIEWED PERSON IN RADIO

The opinions of the Man in the Street carry a lot of weight with the radio audience, as is indicated by the fact that that mythical gentleman has been interviewed more frequently over the air than any other personage in America since Columbia originally got in touch with him the day before the start of the Republican Convention at Chicago in 1932.

During the last three and a half years he has broadcast thirty-five times on CBS — an average of once each month — and his ideas have been sought on every controversial subject which has agitated the United States during that time.

The Man in the Street made his first talk over any radio network one hot day in June just after Columbia's engineering department had received the first "lapel" microphone ever manufactured. Ted Husing (the first man-in-the-street interviewer), who was acting as commentator at the Republican Convention, became so intrigued with the little instrument — no larger than a silver dollar — that he hooked it on his coat and wandered about the lobby of the Congress Hotel, interviewing delegates, newspapermen and interested spectators.

Since that time the Man in the Street has become one of the most popular personalities on the air. He has been interviewed in such unlikely places as mines and the tops of skyscrapers.

## PHILLIP MORRIS TO PRESENT NEW SERIES ON CBS

"Johnny Presents," a new weekly series of programs of music and drama, will start on the WABC-Columbia network Saturday, February 13, from 8:30 to 9:00 p. m., EST. (Rebroadcast for western listeners at 11:30 p. m., EST.) The sponsors are Phillip Morris and Company.

Johnny Roventini, 43-inch-high "call-boy" will be master of ceremonies, introducing Phil Duey, baritone; the "Swing Fourteen," a chorus of 14 mixed voices; the Giersdorf Sisters, vocal duo; the "Four Rogues," a male quartet. Charles Martin will present a regular feature of "thrill" sketches.

\* \* \*

## CARNATION CONTENTED

Vivian Della Chiesa, young NBC lyric soprano, joined the cast of the Carnation Contented program during the broadcast on Monday, February 1st, at 10:00 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Red Network. Miss Della Chiesa has been signed as a regular star of the series and is the third new name to be added to the Contented programs since January 1. Dr. Frank Black, general music director of NBC, and the Doring Sisters, vocal trio, joined the cast on January 4. Miss Della Chiesa began her study of music when she was three years old. She took up voice when she was seven. Thirteen years of study with prominent instructors and at the Chicago Musical College gave her a solid musical background. Her ambition is to sing in grand opera. Last Fall she realized that ambition when she made her operatic debut with the Chicago City Opera Company, singing Mimi in *La Boheme*.

\* \* \*

## GOOD TIME SOCIETY OFFERS ALL STAR NEGRO REVUE

The Good Time Society, a hi-de-hi musical comedy program with an all-star cast of Negro performers, including Chick Webb and his swing orchestra, is now being heard on Mondays, at 10:00 p. m., EST, over the coast-to-coast Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company. The show features situation comedy, with a thread of plot carrying the program forward week to week.

It is built around the Good Time Society, the chief purpose of which is to provide all members with boundless hilarity. Juano Hernandez, Negro writer and actor who writes the script, takes the leading role of Potentate Jones, boss man of the Society, who announces at the beginning of each meeting the obligation of each member to contribute to the serious business of entertainment.

From this point, Chick Webb and his band, Ella Fitzgerald and Charles Linton, exponents of ho-de-ho vocal stuff, the Four Ink Spots and the Juanita Hall Choir attempt to outdo each other in a contest of rhythm and laughter in the swift tempo characteristic of Negro entertainment.

\* \* \*

## FCC RULING AIDS OPERA BROADCAST

In reply to a request made by the National Broadcasting Company, the Federal Communications Commission has ruled that half-hourly station identi-

(Continued on Page 360)

# In the Popular Vein

By HORACE "VAN" NORMAN

## BALLROOM DANCE

AAAA—*This Year's Kisses*, and *He Ain't Got Rhythm*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25505.

AAAA—*Slumming on Park Avenue*, and *I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm*. Ray Noble and his Orchestra. Victor 25507.

To the great surprise of nobody at all, Irving Berlin has again rung the bell, hit the bull's-eye, and otherwise demonstrated anew his incontestable supremacy as the American song-writer of the age by his score for the current film, *On the Avenue*. To anyone who might be inclined to minimize Berlin's achievements in the popular song field, it need only be pointed out that he has been turning out smash song hits for the past quarter century, and that of the approximately 750 songs he has written in this time, a large percentage of them have been hits or near hits. Compared with this record, no one else is even close, nor does there appear to be any likelihood of its being duplicated for a long time to come. Whether or not these most recent tunes from his inexhaustible pen represent the finest work he has given us is open to question. There can be no possible doubt, however, of their being destined for enormous popularity, and it is pleasant to report that the two discs under discussion are both bang-up jobs, in the very best manner of their respective orchestras. Goodman, of course, gives an emphatically "hot" treatment to both his numbers, and both are supremely effective, particularly *He Ain't Got Rhythm*, with vocalizing by a new member of the Goodman menage, James Rushing, whose method reminds one of "Fats" Waller, except that he is very, very much better.

Noble is every bit as good in his brace of numbers, better numbers, on the whole, than those assigned to Goodman. This is, in fact, another strictly top-notch record that Noble gives us, with everything in it that's needed to put him back where he rightfully belongs, on the top of the heap. Those ardent souls who have been lamenting the lack of a social viewpoint in the American popular song might lend a careful pair of ears, by the way, to the lyrics of *Slumming on Park Avenue*. If this isn't social satire, it is only because Berlin has written such a perfectly jolly tune for it. One of the best and most typically Berlinian tunes in the score, *You're Laughing at Me*, has not been adequately recorded at the time of writing, and must therefore be held over until next month. I mean, Wayne King is the only one to do it so far, and that really doesn't count, — not with this department at least.

AAAA—*Sugar Rose*, and *Breakin' In a Pair of Shoes*. Carroll Gibbons and his Boy Friends. Columbia 3161-D.

Speaking of small town boys that made good in the big city, give a thought to Carroll Gibbons, who did the thing on an international scale, sort of. Hailing from a Massachusetts hamlet, he met with but a moderate degree of success in his homeland, as song writer, pianist and bandsman. He apparently had what it took to please the Londoners, however, as a trip to England several years ago demonstrated, since he has never returned, and for some time, in his berth at the Savoy, he has been what is known as the reigning favorite of London society, even going so far (if we may become somewhat personal) as recently to marry into it. His work, as exemplified by the contents of this record, is the very acme of what might be termed good breeding in music. Sprightly, suave, tasteful treatments of a couple of tunes ordinarily identified with "swing", they are primarily subdued backgrounds for Gibbons' incomparably polished, refined, if unoriginal, piano work. Whoever would have suspected, for instance, that Fats Waller's *Sugar Rose* was as thoroughly charming a tune as it's revealed to be in Gibbons' crystalline performance, after Fats' murderous treatment of his own brain child?

\* \* \*

AAA—*Serenade In the Night*, and *Me and the Moon*. Mantovani and his Tipica Orchestra. Columbia 3159-D.

Successively a tremendously big song hit in Italy, France, England, and now America, *Serenade In the Night* is from the pen of Bixio, Italian writer of *Tell Me That You Love Me Tonight*, and has a pleasantly Continental flavor that probably foretakens a success equal to its highly popular predecessor. The one thing essential in a recording of a number of this sort is the preservation of its original flavor. In other words, to treat a Neapolitan street song as though it were the latest product of Gordon and Revel will not do. Mantovani gives it ideal treatment here, and it should take precedence over the other existing versions of the tune, all of which are quite mediocre.

\* \* \*

AAA—*You Were There*, and *Play, Orchestra, Play*. Leo Reisman and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7798.

These are the two song hits from the current Coward production, *Tonight at Eight-Thirty*, and Reisman does discreet, musically versions of them both. *You Were There* is a number that can and will go places in the long run and it is well to have a thoroughly satisfactory recording of it to turn back to when it comes into its own.

AA—*May I Have the Next Romance With You?* and *Head Over Heels In Love*. Lud Gluskin and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7788.

Here are Gordon and Revel's contributions to the renaissance of the English motion picture business. It is rather curious, but nonetheless a fact, that the outstanding cinema song hits emanating from the English studios have all been the work of American writers. First Harry Woods, then the firm of Hoffman, Sigler and Goodhart, and now the redoubtable Gordon and Revel to do their bit to breathe new life into the British musical film; and very well they have done too. These two numbers, for instance, if not quite as good as many they have written for American pictures, have that slick competence which assures them a reasonable degree of success, and Gluskin is, as always, equally competent in his handling of them, with that ubiquitous and ever reliable figure, Buddy Clark, doing the vocals.

AAAA—*Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, and *When You and I Were Young Maggie*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.

As each new Goodman release follows fast upon the heels of its predecessor, it seems to us that the band has reached a state of perfection never before achieved by a group of this kind. Making possible exceptions only in the case of Ellington, Casa Loma and a very few other bands which have played together virtually as a unit for a large number of years, no other band begins to approach the technical brilliance of this magnificent outfit. Each new disc by them, allowing occasional slumps for their frankly commercial efforts, seems a bit better than anything they have done previously. Thus we would be willing to swear that *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* is the finest record they have ever made. Next month we may feel differently, but we can't honestly understand how a record *could* be much better than this one. The blazing vitality and drive of this record is simply miraculous. Witness the piston-like three-beat figure in counter rhythm to the theme at the beginning, or the fantastically exciting tenor work of Vida Musso, who plays a good deal like those colored virtuosi, Hawkins and Berry, but with a technical finish that's all his own, or the omnipresent Krupa, the most brilliantly talented drummer of the age.

AAAA—*Cream Puff*, and *Sobbin' Blues*. Art Shaw and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7806.

With one of the oddest instrumental set-ups in the business and with major prominence given to his own superb clarinet, Artie Shaw and his band are doing all right, as predicted by this column some months ago. If there is such a thing as "sweet swing" (a term which is, on the face of it, completely anachronistic) this group certainly achieves it principally through constant use of the four strings. Of course, any clarinet leader who offers himself in competition with Goodman is bound to suffer somewhat thereby, but Shaw can stand the comparison better than anyone we can think of at the moment. This disc is one of his best current efforts, with *Cream Puff* turning out to be quite a witty novelty, original without being gaudy and a distinct addition to the rather small group of really worthwhile specialty numbers being employed by bands just now.

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(Continued from Page 358)

cation breaks may be dispensed with during broadcasts of Metropolitan Opera Company performances, and instead, the identification may be made between acts of the opera.

As a result of the ruling, millions of music lovers throughout the United States and South and Central America no longer will have the continuity of the world's finest operatic productions, in the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, broken at half-hour intervals during the NBC broadcasts. With the change in timing of the station breaks, the opera will be broadcast in its entirety as performed.

#### KLEMPERER TO CONDUCT LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC IN CBS BEETHOVEN CYCLE

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Otto Klemperer, presented the first program in an extended cycle of concerts to be devoted to the works of Beethoven on the nation-wide WABC-Columbia network Saturday, January 30, from 1:45 to 3:00 p. m., EST.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Symphony, founded 18 years ago, is in the front rank of America's orchestras. It is composed of 91 noted musicians and has presented many successful seasons of concerts at the Hollywood Bowl and in its own hall.

Klemperer was born in Breslau in 1885. Brought up in Hamburg and trained at the Hoch Conservatory of Frankfurt he became in 1907 the conductor of the German Opera in Prague and in 1909 led the Hamburg Opera. These engagements were followed by others at Bremen, Strasbourg and Cologne, after which he came to America as director of the country's finest orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic Symphony.

#### GUEST CONDUCTORS FOR CLEVELAND ORCHESTRAS

Four distinguished guest conductors will direct the Cleveland Orchestra in forthcoming concerts of its weekly NBC Music Guild programs, heard every Wednesday, from 1:45 to 2:45 p. m., EST, over the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company. Igor Stravinsky, Russian conductor and composer of the famous *Fire Bird Suite*, will be the first guest director, on the February 24 concert.

Georges Enesco, known as one of the world's great violinists, who, in recent years, has been a conductor in his native Roumania, will lead the orchestra in its concert March 3. He will be followed March 24 by Vladimir Golschmann, conductor of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and on March 31 by Hans Lange, assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. Artur Rodzinski, regular conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, will be on the conductor's stand for the concerts to be given February 3 and April 21.

#### GLADYS SWARTHOUT BEGINS NEW RADIO SERIES FEBRUARY 10th

Gladys Swarthout, well known mezzo-soprano and star of opera, radio and screen, will broadcast the first of her new series of half-hour programs on Wednesday, February 10, at 10:30 p. m., EST. The program, which will be heard over the coast-to-coast NBC-Red Network, is sponsored by the country's leading ice and ice refrigerator companies.

With Miss Swarthout in the premiere broadcast, as well as succeeding broadcasts in the series, will be the noted baritone, Frank Chapman. Chapman has appeared in the past with the Italian National Opera and the America Opera. Robert Armbruster, well known conductor, will direct the concert orchestra. Howard Clancy will be the announcer.

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**Griffes: The Lament of Ian the Proud,** sung by William Hain with Jerome T. Bohm at the piano.

### Disc No. 6

**Joseph Marx: Three Songs—Lieder, In meinen Traueme Heimat, and Der Rauch,** sung by Paul Engel, baritone, with Jerome T. Bohm at the piano.

### Disc No. 7

**Scriabin: Piano Sonata No. 4,** played by Katherine Heyman.

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